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STARBURST

SPACEHUNTER
JAWS 3D
METALSTORM

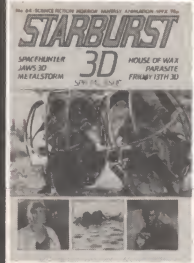
3D
SPECIAL ISSUE

HOUSE OF WAX
PARASITE
FRIDAY 13TH 3D





TWILIGHT ZONE - THE MOVIE



Starburst 64
December 1983 issue

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NEXT STOP – THE TWILIGHT ZONE CRITIQUE

After the somewhat mixed reception which issue 52 (*Krull*, remember?) prompted from your ever-opinionated readership, I was gratified to see the format revived to a certain extent for your joint coverage of Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone* and the film version of same. Your introduction was a little confusing as to who should take the credit for the feature, but it seems Phil Edwards was the man chiefly responsible, and a fine job he did too. Congratulations to all concerned.

And that, I am delighted to say, goes for the *Twilight Zone* movie as well. Like many others I have followed the progress of the film from conception, to casting, allocation of episodes to directors, the on-set tragedy and subsequent delays in production, through to completion and review stage, with great interest. For months I had been looking forward to the film – then the reviews poured in, and my interest wavered and waned. Spielberg's *Kick the Can* weak? Landis' segment too simple, and top-heavy on moral? Scatman Crothers hammy? Could so many critics be wrong? Fortunately, there were. The film is filled with moments of wonder and magic, icy horror, touching fantasy.

Often, multi-story packages are marred by let-down framing devices which strain credibility (even taking into consideration their fantastic content), but the Brooks/Aykroyd prologue and the chilling reprise contained within *Nightmare* at 20,000 Feet set the tone perfectly. Landis' own story was a trifle slow-moving to begin with, but as Vic Morrow (impressive as the bar-room bigot, Bill Conner) stepped out into a nightmare of forty years ago the terror of his situation began to build nicely. I feel that a slightly more assured hand was needed on direction, as we, the audience, are never quite drawn into this horrific experience at first hand. Bill remains a character on a cinema screen, whereas the viewer finds himself going, temporarily, insane inside the head of John Lithgow's Valentine later in the film.

Spielberg's version of *Kick the Can* was the most moving example of screen craft since the days of Frank Capra. Reports of *E.T.* – the *Extra-Terrestrial* having caused floods of tears rather surprised me, as I found it less response-provoking than, say, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* – but I could readily understand similar mass outbreaks of displayed emotion over this wonderful slice of sentimentality. Spielberg has proved, and once again proves here, his unique capability to direct children – but his obvious care in working with the older performers is captured forever in this *Twilight Zone* story. Scatman Crothers is, as ever, a warm and winning perso-

Starburst LETTERS

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nality on-screen (and off-screen too, by all accounts).

Joe Dante's films are so enjoyable because of the director's great sense of humour, and his insertion of in-jokes. Yes Joe, we spotted 'Bill' Murry, and the great Dick Miller (as Walter Paisley!) in *It's a Good Life*, and Warner Brothers' Tasmanian Devil from the Bugs Bunny cartoons.

Dante's quarter of *Twilight Zone* wouldn't have been out of place in *Creepshow* – it employed similar lighting effects and backgrounds, monsters not unlike Savini's Spectre from Romero's prologue, and marvellous comic performances, especially from Kevin McCarthy. I wouldn't be at all surprised to find him in *Creepshow 2* after this.

George Miller's *Nightmare* at 20,000 Feet lived up to all expectations, dominated as it was by John Lithgow's tremendous rendering of the Valentine role. Word arrives from Australia that *Mad Max 3* will employ Miller only for the action sequences – I find this hard to believe, as he shows a real talent here for directing actors – and gremlins, for that matter (for me, the most chilling moment in the entire film was the sight of that horrible creature grinning knowingly and wagging a finger at the deranged air-passenger). The surprise ending was a bit hurried, but I put that down to re-editing, as of course *Kick the Can* was originally intended to close the film. However, on this evidence I do hope Miller gets to make his psychological horror film



Roxanne one day.

Hope the forthcoming TV revival (which will be airing as you read this) proves that Serling's series deserves its reputation. By the way, there are whispers that ITV are bringing Darren McGavin to our screens as Kolchak very soon. Things are looking up for fans of terror on the tube, and I'm sure we all agree that is good news.

Darrell Buxton,
Willington,
Derbyshire.

THE CRONENBERG CULT

I read with great dismay and astonishment Universal's decision not to release David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* allegedly because it was "too violent" for the British market. Admittedly Cronenberg relies heavily upon repulsion to scare, he has, however, made an attempt to go beyond the stalk-and-slash movie which has become too prominent in the genre. While other directors have been content to make retreats of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Halloween* Cronenberg, as well as DePalma and Argento, have pushed the genre to new areas. All Cronenberg films have made for absorbing cinema, he has certainly earned his cult status.

For Cronenberg *Scanners* was a remarkable step up the ladder of directorial maturity. *Videodrome* is his coming of age. I only hope that firstly, Universal re-think and secondly, Paramount give Cronenberg's latest production *Dead Zone* a fairer deal with distribution in the UK.

Jon Wilson,
Oxford,
Stockport.

NICE ONE, TONY

I would just like to offer my congratulations to Tony Crawley for his immensely enjoyable book *The Steven Spielberg Story*, and for his continued endeavours inside and outside your magazine.

That goes for the rest of you too – hope to be with you on the hundredth issue.

Nicholas Hill,
Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough.

VIDEO PROSE

What has happened to your video reviewer, Barry Forshaw, in the September *Starburst*? I read: "Only minutes into Thomas McLoughlin's tight little thriller, so much as moves them like puppets." Now that is worthy of William Burroughs at his worst! However, it may not be Mr Forshaw's fault, poor fellow. May I suggest that it is your typesetters showing off after attending a course in Post-Surrealism at their local evening class. I don't know why I am complaining because I loved the pure poetry of "... but is here

fresh and vigorous. corpses have a rather papier-mâché look... "I can hear Jean Cocteau applauding in his grave.

Keep up the good work!

Patrick Rowe,
London.

WHY CHANNEL 4?

Thank you so much for the wonderful edition of *Starburst* devoted to *The Twilight Zone* and dedicated to the memory of the late Rod Serling. As I write, the movie is opening here within days and the television series starts the day after that; at long last I'll get to see this much-talked-about piece of television history. I'm sure that the information and stills in this issue will prove

invaluable.

Dave Baldwin's letter in the same issue – about the possibility of a science-fiction/fantasy series on Channel 4 – prompts me to ask a question. Namely: why Channel 4? Do we really have to be treated as yet another "minority" waiting to have our particular subject aired on this bizarre mish-mash of a channel?

Be warned: on Channel 4, a programme of this type would be very badly packaged, presented and scheduled. And I think that enthusiasts who appreciate fantasy, science fiction, horror, etc., deserve a lot better than that.

Think about it for a minute – Channel 4's best programmes – the real crowd-pullers – such as *The Avengers*, *Out*,

Boris Karloff Presents (wasn't that originally called *Thriller*, by the way?), *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Munters*, *Car 54 Where Are You?* and all those great old movies didn't originate from Channel 4 – they all came from elsewhere, and are the only things of any real quality and style to be seen on this channel.

Even then, they aren't treated with a lot of respect. Compare BBC2's reverential treatment of *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone* with the way in which the Boris Karloff series and *The Avengers* are served up on Channel 4 – sequences chopped out, title graphics removed. Very tacky. Channel 4 doesn't deserve these series.

Added to that, of course, viewers in

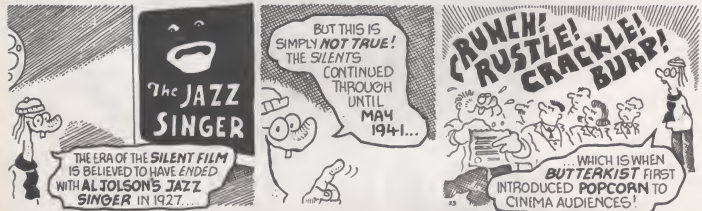
South Wales – like myself – have to endure rescheduling on the Welsh fourth channel (*The Avengers* was screened at 5.55 pm on Mondays – I ask you!).

So what's the alternative? Well, there's always BBC2; and channels like Central seem fairly receptive to new ideas. By the way – just for your future reference – it's useless trying to convince Leslie Halliwell of anything. Have you ever seen his column in *TV Times*? All his most interesting acquisitions go straight to Channel 4 while the made-for-TV trash gets peak time slots on ITV.

Graham P. Williams
Mayhill,
Swansea.



The Return of **FLICKERS** by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



SPIELBERG'S 3-D SHOP

It seems to be months after I first heard of the L.A. whisper, but at last I can confirm that Steven Spielberg is taking that trip "through another dimension." He is going to make the 3-D musical movie of Roger Corman's 1958 creepyspoof, *The Little Shop of Horrors*.

But — there had to be a but, right? — he's producing the project only. Martin Scorsese, admired by Steven as the film-maker of his movie-brat generation, will direct. Spielberg will be co-producing with the disc man David Geffen, a producer of the Broadway musical by Howard Ashman — the *Rock Follies* guy. Although it's been a hit on stage, the musical is having a virtual de-coke before hitting the Warner Brothers' sound-stages. All the songs are being axed and a whole new score will be composed for the film... the first-ever 3-D musical, I should think.

... & SPIELBERG'S MUSICAL

The reason Spielberg is letting Scorsese direct his 3-D *Shop* is quite simple. Steven has his own musical in the wings. A revamping of *Peter Pan* to star Michael Jackson. In fact, it was as a test of his musical abilities that Spielberg directed both of Jackson's promo-videos for *Billie Jean* and *Beat It*! No wonder that Jackson album sold like hot... rocks.

JEDI SOARS...

If he really ever had any doubt about continuing the series, George Lucas' mind would appear to be made up for him. And fast. In just seven weeks of American business, *Return of the Jedi* has been seen by so many people and earned so much money that it is already the number 5 film in cinema history — probably number 4 or even number 3 by the time you read this.

I am, of course, in this instance, referring, or indeed reverting, to the normal lists of box-office champions as tallied by *Variety*, the American showbiz paper and not their recently-published inflation-related chart.

Jedi's runaway triumph — it's the only Film of the Year, crushing such rivals as *Superman III*, *Octopussy*, *Krull* and any one of the 3-D items — now means that between them, George Lucas and Steven Spielberg have made the top six films in (at least, modern) film history. These are, in case you've just reached cinematic puberty, are:

1. *E.T.*
2. *Star Wars*
3. *The Empire Strikes Back*
4. *Jaws*
5. *Return of the Jedi*
6. *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

With the *E.T.* and *Indy Jones* sequels to come, it can't be very many years to go until the Lucas/Spielberg team have all the entries in the Top Ten to their credit. The rest of the current Ten (*Grease*, *Tootsie*, *The Exorcist*, and

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

The Godfather are certainly in the same list but not anywhere close to the same six figure league.

... OTHERS DROOP

Every giant has his off-day, though. Spielberg's production of *Twilight Zone* — not, of course, helped by some of the worst publicity of any film in recent memory — is not creating any records.

And I've not heard many good things about Lucas' foray into animation, *Twice Upon A Tale*. For a film with four scripters, including both directors John Korty and Charles Swenson, and their producer Bill Couturie, the main fault with the cartoon appears to be that old familiar moan... no story!

One American critic went so far as to say the film was "too sophisticated for the kids and just too dull for adults."

E.T.'s KIDS

Lovely Dee Wallace (terrific in *Cujo*, and better still in person. See interview elsewhere this issue) is not the only one to be doing very nicely thank you out of *E.T.* Her screen kids are fielding movies offers right, left and centre.

Young Gertie, aka Drew Barrymore of the famous clan, will be young Charlie McGee with David Keith as

Poppa, in Dino De Laurentiis' eventual production of Steve King's long postponed *Firestarter*. ... and with his *Misunderstood* weepie ready to flood the hankie market, young Elliott, Henry Thomas, returns to something more akin to our genre with *Cloak and Dagger* for the *Psycho II* director, Richard Franklin.

The bad news is that... Drew's movie (also featuring Louise Fletcher) is being directed by Mark Lester. You know him, he did a little thing entitled *Class of 1984*. Nice chap; terrible film; and far from the Steve King class, but that's Dino for you. And Henry's flick is being produced by the American answer to Dino de Dumbo, Allan (Grease) Carr.

But then not even the wondrous Dee Wallace escapes such traps. In her latest tele-flick, *Wait 'Til Your Mother Gets Home*, she's stuck with Paul-Michael Glaser as co-star — Starksy out of his Hush.

JERRY CAN!

To some, Jerry Goldsmith must seem like a kind of second string John Williams. After all, he only seems to score the lesser Spielberg movies, even though many consider him to be the better composer. It's certainly safe to

say that there's nothing Jerry-built about Goldsmith's scores. But now, Goldsmith is one up on Williams. Jerry turns actor in the movie Spielberg's producing for Joe Dante, *Gremkins*. What's next? Clio Goldsmith and Jerry Goldsmith in a movie produced by Clio's French Uncle, Gilbert de Goldschmidt...?

KING'S CORN

Cujo is out and very rabid. *Dead Zone* is due from Cronenberg and not Sydney Tootsie Pollack as first planned. *Christine* is coming from Carpenter's "garage". *Firestarter* is on location in Carolina, making or breaking Mark Lester. *Creepshow II* starts after New Year's sometime. *The Stand* should stand up by the summer. Six Steve King books cinema-bound.

Now, we can add one more. The one that went astray has turned up, with all the hype worthy of the Prodigal Son, at the new New World company. That's *Children of the Corn*, all about some cult worshipping the cornfields and, in particular, "He Who Walks Behind The Rows".

King had originally handed that project over to a Maine neighbour, documentarist Harry Willand. He was all set to feature Lance Kerwin, the *Salem's Lot* kid, as the inevitably oddball King child with hidden powers. Last time, I met Steven, though, he was parlaying with independent producer Larry Sugar about the story. Then, Sugar took over a top job at Lorimar and, well to cut a lot of tradey gossip down, it's landed up at New World.

"The story has been optioned repeatedly, it's turning into an annuity," King's wife told me.

"It's the sort of thing, George (Romero) should do," said King at the time. "Because these other people look at it and say, 'Yes, we can do a prologue in Haiti and bring our budget up to \$14 million.' When what it is is really a very



low budget artistic picture. But nobody wants that..."

Corn is a King screenplay, by the way. You know, that which we don't ever get enough of. Or we didn't until Romero linked forces with the King of the word-processors.

(See, who's jealous that Steve had more folk at his Forbidden Planet book-signing stint than I did at mine? Listen, I know my place! To those that came along, mostly Starbursters: thanks. To those hoping to have won a copy of the Spielberg book in our oh-so-easy contest: I hope you've all won, and to those that simply stayed away... I don't blame you. Who wants to meet another bearded scribe when the clean-cut (and shaved) Alan McKenzie will be along there soon enough with his book!)

CORMAN'S PITS

No wonder Roger Corman sold New World. He must have been in a state of sheer exhaustion at the time if his *Space Raiders* is anything to go by. Cheap, Corman can be, but usually with some style. This 82-minute offering is strictly the pits. The American poster includes a creature not unlike Chewbacca's brother - and it doesn't appear in the film at all. What does, and over and over again - are off-cuts and trims from the effects shots for *Battle Beyond The Stars*, plus James Horner's score for that 1980 film which Corman has also used again in *Sorcerer*. Howard R. Cohen is credited with directions, a term which needs "sloppy" attached to it. Vince Edwards (remember? Tele's Ben Casey) stars with kiddo David Mendenhall, cute Paty Pease and Dick Miller's inevitable stroll-on. But no, compared to the entertaining *Android*, *Space Raiders* is the waste of time and money. Forget it.

WRONG STATION

Another New World release, untouched by Corman hand (I think) is not much better. *Wavelength* features Bobby, sorry Robert Carradine and Cherie Currie, as a cut-price Richard Dreyfuss and Melinda Dillon, is a tale of visiting (and bald) aliens that would be a real *Clone Encounters* - except that the visiting trio are not exactly nice chaps. Director Mike Gray, previously concerned with fiery documentaries, insists he wrote the script before Spielberg wrote his. In that case, Mike, you must have known you were on to a loser. Small wonder New World are running to King country...

DONNER'S BLITZEN!

After two years careful plotting, *Superman's* director, Richard Donner, has at last begun his cherished fantasy romance, *Ladyhawke*, in Rome... with Bertolucci's man, Vittorio Storaro, on camera, no less. Good cast, too. Matthew Broderick, the whiz-kid who put the bite on *WarGames*, and *Grease II's*



Michelle Pfeiffer have the lead roles of the star-crossed lovers, with vicious support from that super-replicant, Rutger Hauer... heaving, as one might say, after Michelle's Pfeiffer. Also concerned with the movie, Donner's *Omen* producer Harvey Bernhard.

As Richard told us back in 1981, *Ladyhawke* is a 15th-Century, mythological fable about unrequited love. "The curse they live with is that she's a hawk by day and a woman by night - and he's a man by day and a wolf by night. The transformation happens to them at sunrise and sunset. There's almost that moment that, as lovers, they can almost touch..."

Talk about frustrating!

VERNON'S VERVE

Ran into Canadian star John Vernon, looking more frazzled than I was, when I arrived at Heathrow for my first week back in Britain for six months. You don't know John? His movies, for Hitchcock, Siegel and others, include one of the greatest ever fantasy films, *Makavejev's Sweet Movie* (1974), plus John Landis' *Animal House*. Anyway, John tells me he's just finished pounding LA's *Savage Streets* with Linda Blair, and was en route to Paris for Chabrol's *Blood of Others* with Jodie Foster. Neither lady can be described as plump anymore; John can, though.

SPACE VAMPIRES BLAST OFF

It's been hanging around the Cannon Group's shelves for the last five years or more. During which time everybody and his wife has been announced as director - from Zoran Perisic, the man who makes *Superman* fly, to Cannon chieftain Menahem

Golan himself. Now the official word is that Tobe Hooper will direct Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires* in London come January. Last time, Hooper came here for a movie - *Venom* - he quickly exited the project and jetted back home. Since *Poltergeist*, though, he appears to be more sure of himself - enough to get into the *Return of the Living Dead* row. His forthcoming London trip marks the first of three films he's contracted to make for Cannon. No doubt his 3-D re-make of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is included in that bumper-bundle.

SPOCK - MYSTERY DEEPENS

Forget the rumours, it's now official. Leonard Nimoy has begun direction *Star Trek III: The Search For Spock*. The budget is \$15,500,000 (most of which must go on wigs for the aged cast) and the result should be ready in time for the annual summertime blitz next year. With no *Superman* or *Star Wars* sequels around, it could clean up.

Now, if only Nimoy or Paramount would clear up the remaining Spockian mystery. Will we actually get to see Spock in his Big Ears suit or not? Everyone is keeping remarkably mute upon this subject - they want to sell tickets next summer, right?

I'm of the opinion that we'll see Spock but not necessarily played by Nimoy any more. Maybe not even by an actor - but by a computer, for example, conjuring up remnants of Spock in a collection of light particles... perhaps. Then, again, we may see a younger Spock in certain flashbacks, either as a youth or in cuts from Nimoy's previous appearances. Or... but why speculate? Summer's not that far away.

FORD'S BACK

Highspot of my return visit - apart from meeting all the gang again - was collecting reasons why Harrison Ford's back troubled him so much on the second *Indiana Jones* film that he had to fly back home from London for treatment, shuttering the movie for two weeks. Day in and out I heard he'd fallen from a train... an elephant... a camel... his wallet... and, if I remember rightly, a camel train. As his other Solo self might put it, "I'm out of it a little while and everyone gets delusions of grandeur."

Truth of the painful matter is that Ford merely aggravated an old injury - and he could have done that by reaching for the phone or uncorking a stubborn bottle of bubbly. All the stunt-accident tales are, so I'm most reliably informed, an insult to stunt chap Vic Armstrong's reputation and ability for bringing his stars (and stunts) through every 'gag' with nary a scratch. So there, rumour-mongers!

GREAT SCOTT!

Price-tag on Ridley Scott's next movie has now hit \$30 million. It's so hefty, two Hollywood studios are sharing the burden - Fox and Universal. The film, originally called *Legend of Darkness*, is known for the moment as *Legends*. Ridley has been shooting various tests for it at the Fox studios in Hollywood - actual production will begin in Britain and Europe. And no one, but no one, is saying much more than that about it. But, as per usual, watch this space.

TITLE SWITCH

Charles Band, quite the new-style Roger Corman, has a thing about one word titles. Or, to be precise, two words squeezed into one. *Laserblast* was one - and he's just begun *Sword-kill*. It is something of the Band trademark. Except he's lately changed his mind about *Metalstorm*, his newest 3-D release. That's what he called it at Cannes. That's what he sold it as. Back home, he had a re-think and has now come up with the over-heavy *Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn*. I suppose the idea is to make it sound like a sequel... very Cormanesque. Universal dig it though. The Spielberg home base has bought it for America.

TRICKY DICKY

While awaiting the outcome of the Zone accident charges, John Landis has pulled out of the hefty \$18 million two-studio film version of the comic-strip 'tec, *Dick Tracy*. Walter Hill, on a high after *48 Hours*, has taken over the movie with his usual production partner Joel Silver. Warren Beatty, who was said to be all fired up and wanting to play the granted-jawed private-eye and then backed out of the wheeling and dealing, is talking Tracy turkey

GERRY ANDERSON

& CHRISTOPHER BURR'S

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Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

again. He could well wind up as the hero, particularly as his planned mermaid comedy film seems to have drowned with all fins since the Disney studio beat him to the aquatic punch. But there are so many stories about the Tracy plans just now, I don't know which to believe any more.

KUNG PHEW

Walter Hill's *Warriors* star, Michael Beck — he was also the headliner of Harley Coklis's *Battletruck* — has turned to television for, he hopes, a spell. Judging by the Paramount pilot movie, *The Last Ninja* doesn't stand much of a chance. Not if David Carradine's old *Kung Fu* series can be picked up for re-runs at a low-key price. Beck's character is very much Carradine's Caine here all over again. All Kung, yet very little PheW. Oh sure, the idea has now been updated to after the Korean war, with the Japanese actor Mako, farming on California's West Coast, raising crops and an adopted white son, and teaching him the Ninja ropes. Flashforward and the kiddie (Kevin Brando, no less) is now Mike Beck, an international antiques man, ready to drop everything — except the Ming! — when his Government calls with a crash job of ninj-ing.

Beck was fine, particularly in the gung ho finish; Nancy Kwan was wasted as his semi-sister; and that I'm sure is the last we'll hear of *The Last Ninja* as a tv idea. Not, though the last of Beck. He's good. Better each time out. So much so, one can now actually forgive him for *Xanadu*.

FAST TAKES

Vic Morrow's daughter, Jennifer Jason-Leigh is taking (bravely) a *Death Ride To Osaka*. . . Virgins Films have bought Steven Paul's version of Kurt Vonnegut's *Sleepstick*, in which Jerry Lewis is supposed to actually act. . . Lou Ferrigno signed for a new TV series (it's what he wants; he hates travelling) called *MedStar*, about a para-med. . . Horror siblings Erika and Brent Katz, last seen as the *Amityville II* kids, are in harness anew for Richard Friedman's *Unknown* chiller. . . Unknown director, too, no? . . . Still, he has Farley Granger, in the cast; he was one of Hitchcock's *Strangers On A Train*. . . John Carpenter mate, Nick Castle Jr. is directing Robert Preston as *The Last Starfighter*. . . Sigourney Weaver taking five from movies and trying the stage again in Harold Pinter's *Old Times*. The only thing in the closet in a Pinter play is

more pauses. . . After scoring *Something Wicked This Way Comes* and *Krull*, James Horner's hoping for a hit at last with the *Gorky Park* thriller. . . Friday 13th director Sean Cunningham has signed a three-year Columbia movie deal via Andrew Fogelson's production company. That's the one called, and why ever not, *Fogbound Inc.* . . Jane Seymour telly-bound in a ghost number, *The Haunting Passion*, with *Simon* and *Simon's* Gerald McRaney. . . Down under producer Tony Ginnane (*Patrick*, *Harlequin*, etc) making *Slipstream* in Sydney, to be followed by a Victorian chiller called *Mesmerised*. . . (then what did he do?). . . The hot word from Warner Brothers in L.A. is that Joe Dante's *Gremlins* is "like, sensational". . . Aren't they all. . . Not so sure about *Greystoke*, though. Could well be another *Krull*. Warners are suddenly pushing and capitalising the *Tarzan* name in the longish title. Whole movie stands or falls on the apes looking as real as, well, the Ewoks. . . Jayne Mansfield's old muscle-man, Mickey Hargitay has joined the muscle-bound movies in Rome, with their daughter Marisa. Difficult to stop laughing, but Mickey's playing Zeus, last performed by Olivier in *Clash of Titans*. We'll have Lou Ferrigno tackling *Hamlet* any day now. Alas, poor Yorick, you won't like me when I'm angry. . .

WEDDING BELLS

Sorry about this, Clark. Just take a seat and take it easy. I've got to tell you. . . Lois Lane has got married! And to a romantic Frenchman, at that. He's the director of Margot Kidder's new Franco-American tv mini-series *Louisiana* —



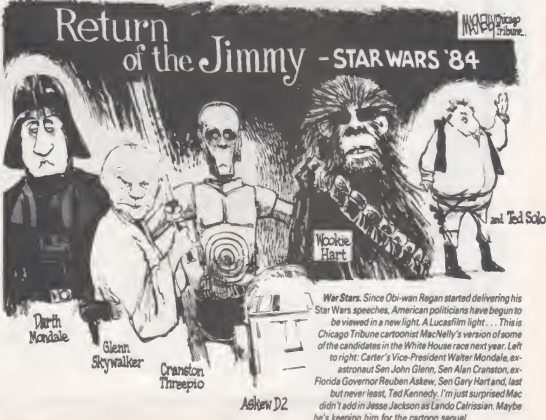
TELE-ANIMATION

Stand by for more — plenty more — American animation on ITV. Latest purchases include some 85 half-hours of *Scoby-Do*, plus such cartoon "specials" as *The Incredible Detectives* and, sure you're ready for this, *Bunnicula*, *The Vampire Rabbit*. The TV-AM show have picked up such series as *Space Ghost*, *Pac-Man* and *George of the Jungle* — and London Weekend has invested, perhaps, more wisely, in the second year of *The Smurfs*. Quick, where's the BBC button. . .

COMPUTA THEME

If you like the festival, go buy the album. . . The fourth *MystFest* staged recently at the Italian coastal retreat of Cattolica, had its own theme tune. It was played before each big film or retrospective screening during the eight-day, 54-film event. Luigi Cinque's composition included generous nods to some of the best mystery movie themes — David Raskin's *Laura* and Bernard Hermann's *Psycho* being the most instantly recognisable. Cinque then shoved all the old themes and his new notes into a blender — a computer. . .

Top prize winner at *MystFest*, by the way, went to our own Desmond Davis (*Clash of Titans*) for his Sherlock Holmes movie, *The Sign of Four*. That's the one (of two) films with Ian Richardson making a supreme Sherlock, not to be confused with the Granada tv series being shot around Cheshire, headlining Jeremy Brett. Just thought I'd make that clear. But you know what they say. Too many Sherlocks spoil the Watson.



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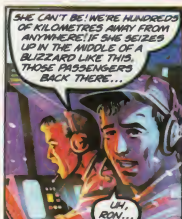
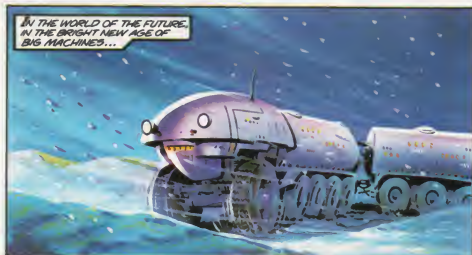
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Starburst History of 3-D

Part One: The Best... The Making of *House of Wax*

When Arch Oboler's low-budget 3D jungle adventure, *Bwana Devil*, burst out of movie theatre screens in late 1952 and caused a box office sensation, it was predictable that other studios should sit up and take notice of the United Artists release. Warner Brothers, who had pioneered the use of sound in the late 20s, saw in the 3D medium an opportunity to try to regain some of the ground lost to television.

Studio head Jack Warner was keen to have Andre de Toth direct the company's first 3D outing. De Toth, a solid craftsman with a reputation for bringing films in on time and budget, had

professed his belief in the 3D process in an article for *Variety* in 1956.

Choosing a subject for the feature also posed little problem. The science fiction boom was under way and with it, a revival in the popularity of horror films. In 1933 Warners had a minor success with Michael Curtiz' *Mystery of the Wax Museum*, an uneasy blend of barnstorming horror (a la Warner's previous success *Dr X*) and crude comic relief. It told the story of a mad waxworks owner (played by Lionel Atwill in that overblown best) who builds his displays using corpses covered in molten wax. He's also badly scarred from an earlier conflagration and disguises himself with a wax replica of his own face. This interesting, if simple plot, based on a story outline by Charles Belden was worked up into a full screenplay by Carl Erickson and Don Mullaly.

But speed was of the essence, for as far as Warner was concerned, for his studio wasn't the only one keen to get the next 3D movie on the market. Harry Cohn's cut-rate Columbia set up was readying their own 3D entry; a hastily re-written "flatly" called *Man in the Dark*. Screenwriter Crane Wilbur was given the job of re-shaping the Mullaly and Erickson script, now to be called *The Wax Works*. Wilbur did little to the original, other than combining some characters and bringing the 30s dialogue up to date for its supposed "period" setting.

The decision was made to shoot the

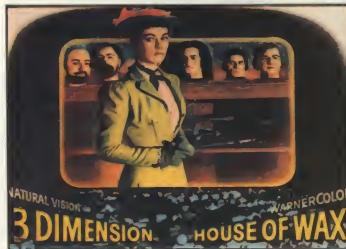
film in the Natural Vision 3D process (a two camera system) and WarnerColor, and the film went into active production on 19th January, 1953. By the time shooting was completed a scant 28 days later, it had a new title - *House of Wax*.

A small irony in the hiring of de Toth was the fact that he only has one eye and therefore was unable to perceive depth himself. But the Hungarian-American director understood a point that so many later 3D productions missed. "It (3D) can combine all the forces, all the possibilities of the motion picture and the theatre. It's not to throw things at you but to involve the audience. Instead of showing it (the story) to an audience, make them part of it; the feeling, the experience."

For the old Lionel Atwill role, de Toth chose Vincent Price whom, the director would later note, "... was absolutely superb. Never missed a minute. A real pro." Up till *House of Wax* Price had been usually cast in character parts, occasionally of a villainous nature. But with the success of *House of Wax*, all that changed and Price found himself on a road which would lead him into a multitude of horror and fantasy roles, right up to the present day. Oddly enough, the actor maintains that *House of Wax* is the only "real" horror film he's made. There are, I'm sure, millions of moviegoers who would dispute that.

To support him in his bravura dual role, de Toth cast Frank Lovejoy as the cop investigating the series of strange

Feature By Phil Edwards



murders which are somehow linked to the wax-works; Phyllis Kirk as the nervous heroine pursued by the mysterious, limping killer; Paul Picerni as a young sculptor and romantic interest for Kirk and the late Carolyn Jones in a small and effectively scatty performance as Kirk's roommate and early victim of the killer. Charles Bronson (then Buchinsky) also appeared as Price's mute/brute assistant.

De Toth may not have been able to "see" 3D, but he understood it and, for the most part, *House of Wax* is free of gimmicks. The major exceptions to this are the Can Can sequence (featured on the original posters oddly enough, considering it's a horror film) and the famous pin-pong-paddle busker, inviting passersby (and the cinema audience) into the wax museum. Price, in character, even says of this gimmick, "Crude but effective.", obviously speaking for de Toth. Otherwise, the feature employs the 3D gimmick to enhance the action, not stop it as was so often the case in later dimensional outings.

One of the most spectacular sequences occurs early in the film when Price's original waxworks is destroyed by fire by his unscrupulous partner. A variety of historical (and non-macabre) wax exhibits were sculptured by Katharine Stubergh and her daughter who were Burbank-based artists. De Toth had three of the bulky Natural Vision cameras set up to record the inferno, the idea being

to start with small fires on the spacious set. But the fire almost got out of control, resulting in a hole being burnt in the studio roof and Vincent Price suffering from singed eye-brows. But the risks seems almost worth it on viewing the completed sequence. The burning of the wax figures, their faces appear to run out of the 3D screen, has a genuinely eerie quality and the scene is rightfully regarded as one of the finest of sustained horror in the genre.

House of Wax is superior in almost every way to *Mystery of the Wax Museum* and a good example of this is the sequence in which Phyllis Kirk smashes Price's "wax" face still carries a punch, despite the fact that we have been treated to several shots of Gordon Bau's superb make-up throughout the film.

House of Wax completed production on February 20th, 1953 at a budget of \$680,000. The Warner Brothers publicity machine went into action, advertising the movie as being in 3D Natural Vision, Warnercolor and Warnersound. The latter was a form of stereo sound consisting of three magnetic tracks (for broadcast behind the screen) and a "surround sound" optical track. This addition, apart from bumping up the shock value of sound effects also made the most of David Buttolph's rousing and atmospheric score.

For the British publicity campaign, the local distributors (also Warners) suggested a series of stunts to tie in with

the film's release. For example, there was a series of cartoon teaser ads to foster art school competitions. Other ideas included hiring a local Barker to demonstrate the "fly-back paddles" seen in the film or "team up with your local waxworks" to present foyer displays.

House of Wax premiered April 10th, 1953 in New York. Six days later it opened in Los Angeles at a special "Premathon", cramming 12 screenings into 24 hours. Although Columbia's *Man in the Dark* beat *House of Wax* into theatres by a couple of days, nothing could detract from the Andre de Toth horror show. The British press echoed their American counterparts: "The best 3D film yet." - *The People*; "... a spine tingling experience." - *News of the World*; "Quite outstanding entertainment." - *What's On*.

With the end of the 3D boom, *House of Wax* slipped into semi-obscure, at least in its dimensional presentation, though it would become a regular on American television. It was successfully shown in 3D at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood in 1971 and was again reissued in 1982, with a new ad campaign, to capitalise on the current 3D explosion.

No doubt, when another 3D revival rolls around (at my guess in the mid-1990s, but probably then with the addition of holographic techniques), *House of Wax* will once again be trotted out from the archives. You can't, after all, keep a classic down!





Directing JAWS 3-D

Alan Jones caught up with Joe Alves in Los Angeles a couple of months back and managed to secure this exclusive interview. Alves has been involved with *Jaws* saga since the beginning – as a production designer on *Jaws*, as a second unit director on *Jaws II*. Then Alves was given a shot at directing the third in the series, filmed in 3-D. Critical opinion over the film has been diverse, though the box-office business, which is what Hollywood really cares about, has been brisk. Which means we'll probably be seeing another Joe Alves helmed project in the near future. *Weatherman*, perhaps?

Despite being the second sequel to one of the top money-making fright films of all time, there are a number of "firsts" connected with *Jaws 3-D*. At 15 million dollars, it is the most expensive 3-D project ever mounted. It features a new camera system developed by Arriflex. And it is the directorial debut of one of the most gifted production designers in the business – Joe Alves. Though his work on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Escape From New York* is ample showcase for his talent, it was his experience as designer on *Jaws* and associate producer and second unit director on *Jaws 2* that ensured he was seriously in the running for the possibility of helming *Jaws 3-D*. And when it was Alves himself who came up with the idea of a sequel in 3-D, his transition was assured.

Richard Matheson and Carl Gottlieb's screenplay is set at Sea World, a huge marina along the Florida Coastline. The day before a 35 million dollar addition to the aquatic park is due to open, a great white shark swims into the lagoon causing havoc for all concerned. Oscar winner Lou Gossett Jr plays Calvin the president of the Sea World conglomerate who hires Dennis Quaid to build the park. Quaid's character is the grown-up son of the Amity police chief, played by Roy Scheider in the earlier films. This tenuous link was added to the story because of a decision at the executive level at Universal who felt it might put people off seeing the picture if they felt it was a totally new story. Other key members of the cast are John Putsch (Jean Stapleton's son) as Quaid's brother who is in town to celebrate a spring break, Bess Armstrong star of *High Road to China* and pompous, world-weary adventurer Simon MacCorkindale.



Starburst: *Jaws 3-D* is not only your debut as a director but the first time you have ever worked in the 3-D medium. Didn't you feel you had bitten off more than you could chew?

Joe Alves: No, because it was the key to getting the film off the ground in the first place. It is so difficult to make the transition from production designer to director or whatever. Even though you have contributed to film in many areas, there is always that question of doubt. "Can he direct?" The question wasn't so much if I could put a film together—it was more how I would deal with the actors. It all came about because I was pursuing many other projects for years after directing a lot of the second unit work on *Jaws 2*. A lot of them came very close. One was a Grand Prix story to be shot in London for Filmways that I spent time scouting locations for. Another was *They Came by Night* which was a science-fiction story concerning cattle mutilations. I was going to direct Conan for a while too. Then there was *Weatherman*, but we just couldn't seem to get the funding for that either. So I would have to do design work to pay the rent before I could revert back to the task of getting one of these projects off the ground. That is why I did *Escape From New York* and why I was pencilled in for *The Ninja*, until that got cancelled for the first time. I then heard from the late Verna Fields, editor of *Jaws* and vice-president of Universal, that *Jaws 3* had been given the go-ahead and she wanted me involved in the project, so she put me in contact with the executive producer on *Jaws 2*, I said I would direct or nothing. Instead I was made an advisor to work with the writers to create a story and locations that would for once make a *Jaws* movie controllable. So we came up with the Sea Park concept. In that process, I came up with the idea of *Jaws 3-D* and when I presented it to Landsburg and Universal, the reaction was extraordinary. I had made an accompanying sketch and it just grabbed them. Remember, this was the time when the threes, like *Rocky* etc., hadn't come out yet. The question with *Jaws 3* was always, was there a market for a second sequel? The very idea of *Jaws 3-D* took the onus off 3 and it seemed the only natural way to go. "The new dimension is terror"—a whole new campaign could be brought out which would make it fresh again. And that is how I used 3-D as a vehicle to get the property.



So you had nothing to do with the projected comedy *Jaws 3—People 0* which Joe Dante was supposed to direct starring Bo Derek?

Nothing at all. I thought at the time it was a very strange way for the series to go. The script ridiculed the people who made *Jaws* rather than the genre itself and I thought it was all in rather bad taste. Also I never wanted to do another film in the same vein. Two to three years out of your life doing shark movies is quite enough, but when the chance to direct came up... well, I jumped at it. Looking back, I was really a natural because I was so familiar with it all. I could get a majority of the picture together without being concerned with the elements I wasn't familiar with. Anyway this *Jaws* is different from the other two, so it wasn't *deja vu*. *Jaws 2* had a lot of the same physical problems *Jaws* did as it was back out there fighting the ocean and we had to try and be more ambitious in order to top the first one. It was like fighting a war. With that in my background, it was clearer for me than anybody else to direct because I knew all the potential pitfalls. Jeannot Szwarc, the director of *Jaws 2* entered the project with a host of seemingly insurmountable problems, so I designed *Jaws 3-D* to prevent all that and as a result we weren't down twenty minutes because of the mechanical shark. It worked all the time. I directed it and moved it and as all

the crew had either worked on *Jaws* or *Jaws 2* we were always waiting for a typical "Jaws day" to happen. But it never did. The credits on *Jaws 3-D* say "Story by Guerdon Trueblood". Who is he?

I have no idea. We have never met. He wrote an early draft long before I got involved with the project and it has nothing to do with the film as it now stands. He was probably brought in to write the screenplay after *Jaws 3 - People 0* just to establish a concept. I entered the project just as Richard Matheson had finished his first draft. I suppose I'll have to read it sometime but I think his name is on the credits just for contractual reasons.

You are using a new type of 3-D system developed by Arriflex called Arri Vision 3-D, with some additional photography by Stereovision.

Yes, that's right mainly because we went through months of testing, looking for a process that was consistent. The first week of shooting was horrendous - everybody was learning and as a result we had to scrap the first 5 or 6 days of film because of the image convergence. Then we learnt Arriflex had come up with a system about ten days into our shooting schedule and quite simply the optics were better than anything I had previously seen. Our film is also lit for 3-D which makes it the brightest one ever. You have to punch up the light more in this type of film - you don't just flood it. Once all that was worked out, it wasn't a difficult process to use. There are certain things you don't do - things you just have to be aware of in this type of film. Certain hand shots can strobe if you have too many objects in the foreground. So you have what is called a window which you have to keep things away from a little bit and use your dimensional quality backwards. That is what you have to use all the time in those cheap 3-D films if you constantly want to throw things at the audience. There isn't much of that here though apart from a two-minute montage in the middle of the film including leaping dolphins and a sliding trombone that has been added on the insistence of producer Rupert Hitzig.

So you don't consider *Jaws 3-D* as a gimmick movie?

Definitely not. I made this film in a three dimensional process for visual dimensional quality, not gimmickry. Not that I'm not bringing things into the audience - I'm just doing it carefully in a dramatic moment that I feel could be enhanced by doing something like that. I never wanted to do that type of thing in the context of information or dialogue. Like, "Here have a drink" and pass a glass directly to the audience. That wasn't the intent of this picture - it is far too expensive for that. 15 million dollars is not the sort of money you spend on a cheap shot. The idea was to make a scary film in an added dimension and not a gimmick. It is so very difficult to bring something within inches of your nose and hold focus. Quick buck movies throw things at you so quick, all you feel is your eyes cross and hurt a little bit. Then there is the other extreme like Disney's *EPCOT* film which cost an enormous amount and only lasts 15 minutes because they did the 3-D effects optically using split screen techniques. *Jaws 3-D* strikes a good balance between those two extremes.

The rumours are you have filmed a sequence where the audience literally gets swallowed up by the shark's mouth.

I have shots that are pretty dramatic from inside the mouth but it is very difficult to break the image of the screen. You cannot touch any of the frame. So the effect you are asking about would be very difficult to do.



This spread: A selection scenes from the third film in the *Jaws* series, filmed in 3D and directed by Joe Alves.



The *Sea World* concept made the story more controllable. Were there other changes that made the film easier to make?

The trouble with *Jaws* and *Jaws 2* was that we were battling the ocean which is virtually impossible. Just making a boat picture is difficult but one with a mechanical object... First of all the salt water corrodes the mechanisms and causes them to disintegrate. As you fix one thing, something else is breaking. Then there's the surge of the waves and the weather. We do have a few scenes shot in the ocean but most of them take place underwater in the Marina which was located at Sea World in Orlando, Florida. We built this huge underwater tank which was probably the best custom-made facility in the world. We built a special camera mount and underwater housing with a video tap so I could sit at a port and look at my crew and

actors and speak to them via an underwater speaker system. I could monitor exactly what I was getting. It saved a lot of time because when you usually do a special effects shot like that you are never sure if you have got it right or not, so you usually do a second take for insurance. That could take anything up to an hour to set up, so with the video tape I could run it back and see exactly what I had got.

This film was made on schedule in about half the time of the others. Being in a freshwater tank and having the ability to view the takes and communicate underwater meant we saved a lot of time and money. How does the mechanical shark differ in *Jaws 3-D* to the ones used in the previous films? Here we have the most articulated shark of them all. I used the same effects man I've worked with for years, Roy Arbogast, as on this we decided to carefully plan the shots



which was easy to do as I was the director. Having designed the first shark, Bruce, we were familiar with all the technical aspects. We built a much bigger shark for this and one that would articulate more parts of the anatomy. When a great white bites, it projects its front jaw and the skin rolls back to reveal an incredible set of teeth and gums. When they bite, their eyes roll back from black to white also giving them a very sickening look. Their gills contract too and we have all of these movements in this shark that we didn't have before. I have a scene where I use live dolphins with our shark and it was surprising how well it worked. The dolphins got so nervous that they started attacking the shark by hitting it in the gills, which they do instinctively by nature and they did that here even though our shark was fake. It was a very great compliment.

Isn't any director who comes to a Jaws project working very much in Steven Spielberg's shadow?

Well you are dealing with the same type of fear anyway, aren't you? Having worked on both *Jaws*, I am familiar with everything you can do with a shark and there is no question that the similarity doesn't exist between films. Someone goes into the water and audience anticipation and fear starts. Some will be red herrings and some actual victims. There is a gimmick in this film that makes it quite different from the other two films to prolong using the shark, so it isn't just a *Jaws* remake from reel one—other things will scare as well. So the problems were down to a minimum on *Jaws 3-D*.

By and large, yes. We filmed off season in Orlando so the heat and humidity would be down to a minimum. It suited *Sea World* more

that way as well. We had a couple of bad storms and trouble with the tarpaulin covering the tank which was whipped off by the 80 mph winds. We had tarpaulin covering the tank so we could shoot without sun to control the lighting. However everything was minor league compared to the absolute hell we had on the first two films. The pressure was mainly reserved for the tight post-production schedule. I finished the film in February and had a rough cut assembled ten days later and the film has to be ready for American release at the end of July. (The movie is due for release around Christmas in Britain—Editor)

Is Jaws 3-D a gory movie, in keeping with today's mores?

I actually don't like gory movies. The previous two were more suggestive, the shot of Robert Shaw in the shark's mouth at the end of *Jaws* being the most extreme example. I have the body of a half-eaten man suddenly pop up by the ocean gate between the sea and the marina, but I don't think it is gratuitous as I don't hold on to it for any great length of time. I hope the tension comes from the suspense in the story rather than a disgust reaction to blood and guts.

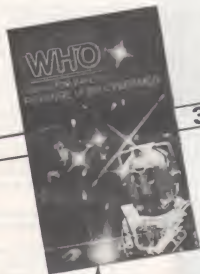
Will Jaws 3-D be the film to elevate the process and be the spearhead of the impending big budget 3-D boom?

It is definitely a pivotal film in that respect. The 3-D is a tool not a gimmick and it is a large investment that means a lot of media coverage. Some people may be disappointed that I don't rely on the usual gimmicks. But they will be a limited audience anyway as there haven't been that many really successful 3-D movies recently. I think when you see it you will realise that you eyes aren't hurting you because the photography is crisp and the optics are matched. That is the big problem with 3-D as the optics have to be the mirror image of each other offset only slightly. With existing 3-D systems we found this wasn't the case at all. So if you don't have two perfect images, you get eye-strain because they are looking at something that isn't quite right. Also this film was blocked and directed to utilise 3-D to its maximum potential. I would put great thought into stacking the actors and take great care in not panning over objects quickly so blurring would occur. The film is wonderful on dolly shots because everything keeps coming out at you. We have the most expensive 3-D film ever made with the longest schedule and probably the best talent. You have to go back to *House of Wax* and *Dial M for Murder* to find the same calibre of people involved. Because of this film I can definitely see *Superman 4* or the new *Star Wars* being made in 3-D. Any big event special effects film is a natural for the process. Imagine flying a spaceship over the audience's heads, or having *Superman* fly out? Actually the latter would be difficult. Little objects are fine but big ones hard to project because of focus and convergence and not being able to hit the frame. If the film is a success more money will be pumped into researching the process. It isn't just our responsibility though. Theatre owners have to have a clean silver screen which can reflect more light and juice the projector with more wattage so the image isn't dark. If all these elements are accomplished then the future is going to be very exciting indeed. I would have no trepidation in doing another 3-D orientated film although I don't want to become known as a 3-D director, primarily. Strangely enough considering my background, I felt more comfortable with the actors on *Jaws 3-D* than anything else. I love the challenge of films like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* but preferred pulling all the elements together much more.

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3-D: The Early Days

Part Two: The Rest... It Came From Outer Space to Revenge of the Creature



Top: This group of B-movie actors strike a dramatic pose when they discover *It Came From Outer Space*. Above: Director Andre de Toth confers with Phyllis Kirk on the Waxwork Museum set of *House of Wax*. Left: The front of house display at the Warner Rendezvous for *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* on its initial release in 1954.

It *Came From Outer Space*, along with *Creature From the Black Lagoon* and *House of Wax* forms a triumvirate of the best 3D movies of the 50s. It's the story of a do-it-yourself astronomer (Richard Carlson) who witnesses a UFO (in this case, what looks like a giant flying flaming golf ball) land. But of course, no one will believe him, least of all Charles Drake, the local sheriff who still carries a torch for Carlson's girlfriend, Barbara Rush. *ICFOS* is too well known by most people to warrant detailed plot outlines (see my feature on Jack Arnold in *Starburst 25*), but it is worth noting that the movie is one of several 50s films on which Steven Spielberg drew for the inspiration of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Harry Essex' script, from a Ray Bradbury story, is very much pedestrian, B-movie standard, although Richard Carlson manages to invest his lines with something approaching a sense of wide-eyed conviction. But the real star of the movie, as has been noted by every film journalist since John Baxter in his *Science Fiction in the Cinema* (1968), is the Californian desert (both real and studio) locale — Jack Arnold's *Alien Earth*.

One of the pleasures of *ICFOS* is that it's a fine entertainment, even in its "flat" version. But the art direction of Bernard Herzbron and Robert Boyle fairly leaps to life with Cliff Stine's 3D monochrome, polarised photography. First run prints of *ICFOS* were tinted sepia, presumably as an added gimmick and supposedly to reduce the eye strain occasioned by dimensional presentation.

Arnold wisely decided to underplay the 3D gimmicks for *ICFOS* and instead to use it as enhancement of key scenes in the film — most spectacularly with the fiery flying golfball (shown twice in the opening five minutes) and the rock slide which buries the UFO from sight after it lands. At the movie's premiere in Los Angeles, on May 27, 1953, the theatre proscenium was rigged with styrofoam boulders which were unleashed from above on the unsuspecting and already excited audience. Good old-fashioned showmanship — where are you today?

It Came From Outer Space cleaned up at the box office, becoming Number One film for a short time, knocking the 3D western *Fort Ti* out of first place after it had replaced *House of Wax*.

3D was booming, with some studios even announcing that all their future features would be in the dimensional process. The 3D gimmick was ripe for exploitation and in 1953 alone there were 32 features and 30 short subjects — from cartoons to travelogues — released in the process.

Phil Tucker's *Robot Monster* came and went with little more than a whimper and a barrel of laughs in 1953. Its two-bit story of alien invasion was only topped by its two-bit effects – a man in a gorilla suit and diving helmet provided the thrills and 3D added nothing. It wasn't until Michael Medved's lionisation of this lost piece of dreck in the *Golden Turkey Awards* and the *Fifty Worst Films of All Time* books, that *Robot Monster* is remembered at all today – as one of the most lamentable inept films ever made.

Allied Artist's *The Maze*, also released in '53, was directed by William Cameron Menzies, who the same year lensed the cult favourite *Invaders From Mars* – a film not actually shot in 3D but often credited as being in the process.

Shot in B&W polarised 3D, *The Maze* displays none of Menzies' talent in the design department, although he also acted as art director on the film. It's one of those "something in the attic" sub-genre movies and the revelation of the semi-human frog creature is quite well executed. There's a slightly Lovecraftian edge to the story, although I think it's safe to assume that this is purely coincidental. Richard Carlson is as wooden as ever and the 3D effects are heavy-handed, adding little to the low impact level of the film.

Cat *Women of the Moon* may have a score by a budding Elmer Bernstein, but the Astor release has little else to recommend it, not even Sonny Tufts. As usual, the producers failed to realise that 3D could only enhance a story, not make

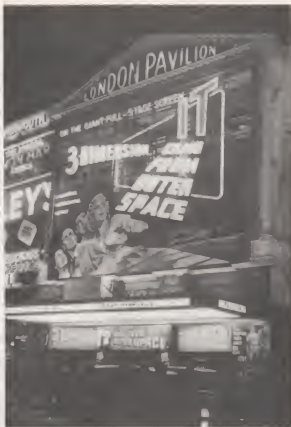


a bad picture better. But then it's not likely that the producers of *Cat Women of the Moon* wanted more out of the movie than a fast buck.

The next 3D fantasy feature to see release was *Creature From the Black Lagoon*. Universal-International once more turned to Jack Arnold to helm a Harry Essex script which was co-authored by Arthur Ross. As with *It Came From Outer Space*, Arnold used 3D to add to the interesting, and in the case of *The Creature*, more original story. While the 3D set-pieces are indeed spectacular – spearguns fired point blank at the camera; the Creature appearing from the bottom of the frame, en relief, and the much written about underwater "love ballet" performed by the Gill Man, with Julia Adams as his unwitting partner – the film remains an entertaining blend of science fiction and horror (primordial monster sub-genre) when seen flat. The film was also the first 3D feature to have its double dimensional image printed on a single strip of celluloid, instead of the often troublesome two strips previously required.

The Creature From the Black Lagoon was a monster hit in both senses of the word. It gave Universal a bona fide and classic addition to their rogues gallery started by Dracula and the Frankenstein Monster in the early 30s. It also went to the top of the 3D grossers and spawned two sequels, of which the first ended the 3D craze of the 50s.





Far left: This man is about to have a Close Encounter with a tall, dark stranger in *House of Wax*. Left: Way before *E.T.*, ever had his adventure on Earth these scientists met the equally lovable alien, Gog. Above: Opening night at the London Pavilion for Jack Arnold's *It Came from Outer Space*. Below: Phyllis Kirk (as Sue Allen) is menaced by a monstrous shadow in *House of Wax*.

On the other side of town, Warner Brothers were keen to duplicate the success they had experienced with *House of Wax*. While it repeated some of the more atmospheric elements of the de Toth classic, such as fog-shrouded streets at the turn of the Century and a mysterious killer on the loose, *The Phantom of the Rue Morgue* must be considered something of an also-ran in the history of 3D fantasy.

Based on Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, it had already been filmed under that title in 1932, in an erotic S&M crazyhouse style by Robert Florey. *Phantom of the Rue Morgue*, under Roy del Ruth's pedestrian direction of Harold Medford and James Webb's script, makes the movie little more than a period detective yarn. Despite this, the film contains a couple of scenes neatly executed for the 3D cameras. In one, a body suddenly drops into view from under a chimney. In another there's a spectacular acrobatics sequence in which the police discover that they are dealing with something non-human.

The dull performances of Karl Malden (the closest equivalent to the Bela Lugosi character in the original), Claude Dauphin and Steve Forrest also go some way in adding to the plodding picture, although Charles Gemora puts in a lively appearance as the phantom/ape.

Over at Columbia, Harry Cohn had contracted Vincent Price for their effort to capture the *House of Wax* crowd. *The Mad Magician*, at a short 73 minutes and

in polarised B&W, had little to offer, other than the Merchant of Menace's eye-rolling. Surprisingly, John Brahm's direction is uninspired and contains little of the fine atmosphere he brought to his other genre pieces, *The Undying Monster* (1942) *The Lodger and Hanover Square* (both 1944). It's interesting to note that the latter bears a certain resemblance to *The Mad Magician*, in the story department.

The Mad Magician proved a minor success, but by this time the writing was on the wall as far as 3D was concerned. Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M For Murder* was shot dimensionally but held back and released flat, after only a couple of screenings in relief. Its recent 3D resurrection has proved that Hitchcock was one of the few directors who went to the trouble to research the medium and make the most of it in a couple of startling scenes. Primarily the famous image, used on the poster art, of Grace Kelly reaching out from the screen for the scissors with which she kills her attacker.

20th Century-Fox's 1954 3D entry was *Gorilla At Large*, an obvious attempt to cash in on *Phantom of the Rue Morgue*. Once again, it looks like a killer gorilla is on the loose, this time in a seedy carnival. Harmon Jones' direction is mundane and there's stolid performances from Lee J. Cobb, Lee Marvin and Cameron Mitchell which further sink the film to the depths of mediocrity. The prime 3D gag in the movie was a high wire act and the usual ape in your lap. The thinking behind the



latter being that there was more longevity for a flat colour film than a black and white one on the re-release circuits. For Hollywood knew that the 3D boom was about to go bust.

Fox had released *The Robe* in 1953 in an attempt to capture audiences with something that television couldn't offer – a huge screen. In many ways the development of the CinemaScope anamorphic lenses was also an attempt to create a more manageable form of the very popular but troublesome three screen Cinerama. Television, still very much the villain of Tinseltown, was gaining audiences hand over fist and as a result forced Hollywood into technical advancements after years of complacency since the introduction of sound. It might be labouring the point, but it must be said: the rise of video is responsible for the current boom in 3D and the continued success of the megabuck special effects films.

Son of Sinbad, from RKO (made in 1954 and released the following year) barely rates as a fantasy. But its gaudy Arabian Nights setting and Dale Robertson's derring-do (at least he tries) along with Vincent Price's villainies, give

Son of Sinbad at least a patina of fantasy. Ted Tetzlaff's direction is sprightly and the colour design is simply outrageous, benefitting from 3D.

Another 1954 entry was the (recently deceased) Ivan Tors production for United Artists, *GOG*. Shot in polarised 3D and colour, it told the story of a rogue computer and its remote controlled killer robots. From all reports (I haven't seen the movie) it's a brisk little film, reasonably well-acted, with a tight plot and good special effects.

The following year, 1955, the bell tolled for the 3D phenomenon. Movie screens the size of aircraft carriers were being installed in theatres all over the world. CinemaScope had won the day with their simple but spectacular invention. All the problems of projecting 3D were gone, for where those films had to be constantly watched and kept in alignment and duplicate splices made in the two separate film strips whenever a sprocket hole tore. (The switch from Standard Academy to 'Scope was a relatively simple one. The aperture plate had to be changed and the special anamorphic lens locked into place and a normal arc projector became a

CinemaScope machine.)

Revenge of the Creature, from Universal-International, was only a fair sequel to the enormously successful *Creature From the Black Lagoon*. Jack Arnold again directed although the movie was little more than a violent exploitation feature. There's little attempt to use the 3D process in the thoughtful way it had been in the original. The witless script doesn't help, nor Joe Gershenson's strident musical score. There's a vague try at instilling the Creature with a modicum of sympathy, particularly in the scenes at Marineland and some interest is generated by having the Gill Man in an urban rather than primitive environment, but for the most part *Revenge of the Creature* is little more than thick-eared monster on the loose formula.

Although *Revenge of the Creature* was no megahit, it did return enough of the investment to warrant a further sequel, although by this time there were no apologies – *Creature Walks Among Us* is definitely B-minus quality. Released in 1956 it was shot in B&W and more importantly, flat.

For fantasy films in 3D, at least, it was the end of an era. ■

Right: Patricia Medina is terrorised by a pair of hairy arms belonging to the Phantom of the Rue Morgue. Far right: "Is she alright?" She certainly is, but these guys won't be after they suffer the *Revenge of the Creature*. Below: A gripping scene from Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder*.



3D IN THE 60s AND 70s

Feature by Phil Edwards

1960 saw a slight revival in 3D with the release of Fox's *September Storm*. Warner Brothers, perhaps seeing a chance to duplicate their *House of Wax* success of 1953, picked up the independent Beaver-Champion Canadian production *The Mask* (released in the UK as *Eyes of Hell*). The film is about an ancient mask which, when worn, plunges the wearer (and the audience, wearing red/green anaglyph masks of their own) into his subconscious and 3D. There's not a lot to recommend *The Mask*, apart from the three, five minute 3D sections. For the most part it's pretty unwatchable.

There was little activity in the 3D field until 1966 when Arch Oboler released *The Bubble*, a partial "depth" (about 112 minutes) movie, it failed to stir up much interest in that form or a later 1976 reissue under the title, *The Fantastic Invasion of Planet Earth*.

Although made in 1967, *Frankenstein's Bloody Terror* (aka *Mark of the Wolfman*) didn't see release outside of its native Spain until 1972. Directed by Enrique L. Egulius and starring the prolific Paul Naschy, the film would appear to have little to recommend it other than the curiosity value: what would a 133 minute, low budget, 70mm, stereophonic and 3D monster movie be like? Don Willis, in his invaluable *Horror & Science Fiction Films* (Volume 1), sums it up succinctly—"Very bad."

Asylum of the Insane turned up in 1977, though probably wasn't released till '73, if even then. There's little information available on this production, other than what appears in Walt Lee's *Reference Guide to Fantastic Films* (1974)—a Lion/Dog Films production for Regal International release, produced and directed by Don Davison. I think it's safe to assume that *Asylum of the Insane* added little to the horror genre or the history of 3D.

In 1974 Paul Morrissey directed *Flesh for Frankenstein* under the auspices of Andy Warhol. Shot in startling and often blood-drenched polarised 3D, the movie caused something of a sensation for its outé shock effects and seeming perversion of the classic Frankenstein story.

It would be another seven years before 3D would once more leap into the public lap.

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Horror & Science Fiction Films (Vols 1 & 2) by Don Willis (Scarecrow Press 1972/82)

Reference Guide to Fantastic Films (3 vols) by Walt Lee (Chelsea-Lee Books 1974)

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American Cinematographer—July 1983



Dee Wallace

& MAN'S BEST FRIEND

Interview by Tony Crawley



Dee Wallace is not a name that readily springs to mind in connection with the term "Fantasy Females". Yet a listing of Dee's screen credits could cause even the most skeptical reader to re-think. The earliest days of her career, in the early and mid-Seventies, were taken up with appearances in American tv movies. Then came a role in the harrowing Wes Craven film, *The Hills Have Eyes*. A small role in *10* followed — many folk forget Dee's even in that movie — then, in rapid succession, *The Howling*, *E.T.*, and now *Cujo*.

Regular *Starburst*er Tony Crawley caught up with Dee Wallace and her *Howling* and *Cujo* co-star and husband Christopher Stone in Paris, while they were visiting to promote her latest movie.

Dee Wallace was born in Kansas City (Missouri) and grew up in Kansas City (Kansas), where her father worked for Dell Comics, publishers of the Disney line of comic books. Her mother was an actress. "She is an actress, and very good, but not professional. She's not an actress in the sense that people know who she is. She started a couple of theatres in Kansas City. She still gives a lot of performances around town. I learned a lot from her."

Then she pauses and adds, "If I could be, some day, as good an actress as my mother, I'd be happy." You can believe her, too. That's Dee. She's real! As you will see as she and Chris Stone fill us in on the making of *Cujo*.



Top left: Karen White (Dee Wallace) is comforted by Dr. George Wagner (Patrick Macnee) in Joe Dante's fun werewolf movie, *The Howling*. Below far left: Dee, Danny and dogs pose for a publicity still for her latest film, *Cujo*. Below near left: Dee Wallace with husband Christopher Stone. Below: Sophisticated! Dee Wallace slips at a Martini for this publicity shot.

Top right: Karen (Dee Wallace) is rescued by colleague Chris Halloran (Dennis Dugan) at the finale of *The Howling*. Top far left: Dee 'n' Danny after suffering the terrors of *Cujo*. Below right: Interesting!

Two very similar shots from two very different movies. The first shows Dee Wallace as Elliot's mum, Mary, in *E.T.* The second shows Dee as Danny's mum in *Cujo*. Well, we thought it was interesting.



Sterburst: Can we start with a question from my daughter? Did you enjoy playing Elliot's mother in *E.T.* and will you be playing her again?
Dee Wallace: Oh, a sly little girl, isn't she?

Naturally. Like father, like daughter.

Of course, I enjoyed playing her. I'm in a classic already! To answer the second question, I don't know. I... really... don't... know! I know they're working on a second script. I've no idea if I'm in it. Or whether, in actuality, it will get done.

Not until 1985, I hear.

Believe me, no one will know until Mr Spielberg is ready to start. Did you have the feeling you were in a classic while you were shooting? Actually the feeling on the set was that we were making a nice little film. This was supposed to be Steven's "little film" before he went on to do, you know, his next big *Raiders*. My feeling is that's why it came out so well. It was meant to be intimate and small. No one was thinking about how much money we were going to make with this. So you had a lot of creative things — from the heart. Rather than from the pocket-book. Christopher Stone: Otherwise we would have asked for a piece, right darling?

Dee: We did ask for a piece, darling! (Laughter)

You seem to have a thing about... well, creatures. You were caught up



the cannibal brood in *The Hills Have Eyes*. You made a tele-film about whales... you became a werewolf in *The Howling* (1981). You're in *E.T.*, of course, smashing the poor little fellow all around the kitchen. You've since done another tele-film about Skeezer, a dog, and now *Cujo*. On my...!

What is it about you and the animal kingdom?
I guess... like attracts like! (Laughs). Bo Derek was a sort of an animal herself and I did *101* (Laughs). I don't know what it is... They say, "Never work with children and dogs." And there I am, with them—all the time. And I've survived so far. Maybe I'll be the one to dispel the myth.

Do you have any small, furry creatures of your own?
Oh yes—my babies! And I miss 'em so much. My two dogs that we rescued from the dog-pound. Just a pair of mutts. Total mutts. One is Rugs; when she's lying down, she looks like somebody ripped up a piece of rug and threw it on the floor... The other one is Spirit.

Because she has a lot of it?
Exactly. Actually, we got her when we were just beginning to be involved in a philosophy that we share in our life and we named her after the positive spirit in all of us.

Does this philosophy have a name?
Conceptology.

Sounds very American.

It's basically positive living—and you can create what you want through your thoughts.

Can't say I've heard of it.

It's not really well known. They don't publicize it. You just find it when you're ready for it.

So how did you get involved in a movie about rabid dogs?

I wasn't the first choice for *Cujo* actually.

You were, for me.

Chris: Robert Redford wasn't first choice for *The Sundance Kid*...

I thought you were going to say... for *Cujo*!

Dee: (Hoots with laughter).

Chris: No, I offer that just as an example. He was fourth choice.

Dee: We had done *The Howling* with producer Dan Blatt and Robert Singer, who we have a great love for and admiration and trust with. And that's how *Cujo* came to us. We'd just finished producing a play in Los Angeles and were totally exhausted. We said, okay, if we can have like two weeks to rest before we start—and we're not interested in doing it if it's a horror film. As you've seen it, it's not that. We really took great pains to make it psychological, a suspense thriller.

You may not like the horror-film label, but come on, *Cujo* is redolent with horror. You could hardly come up with a more horrific story.

Chris: It has aspects of horror. But it's not *Friday the 13th* or *Halloween*.

Dee: See, in America, a horror film is... what's the word... exploitative.

Stalk and slash...

Chris: Graphic!

Dee: Exploitative and graphic. And I thought they treated that side of it very well in *Cujo*. There's nothing that makes you go *eeough!* (She makes a sound akin to someone losing their lunch).

The best horror is in the head, not on-screen.

Exactly.

The audience is stuck in that damned car as well. Exactly! That's what the film is for. Psychological suspense. The husband is afraid of not succeeding in work. The wife is afraid of getting older and not having anything fulfilling in her life. The son is afraid of the monster in the closet, like most children are. We all have these things that we manifest in our minds that we are afraid of. And how here comes the



real threat which makes all the superfluous fears go away... and makes us work together and brings us back together. That's what the film means to me.

And that's why we were so adamant about the fact that they didn't make it a blood and guts thing, which they could have done very easily.

Does that explain the rapid change of director?

The first director leaned towards that blood 'n' guts way. When Lewis came in, I must say Lewis Teague did an amazing job of directing this. He came in two days after we'd started. It's easier in a relationship film to do that but in a film like this, you really need that overall picture of the pace and style.

You liked him, I gather.

Oh, I liked Lewis very much. I must say from my standpoint as an actress, what I appreciated about him so much, is not only he was good but so even-tempered on the set. And you have to understand that everyone was crazed! It was terrible working conditions. Lewis was just always very even. You know, sometimes when you get into a character that's very emotional, you become very emotional, without meaning to. But he kept—for me—a very good and even temper. He was also always open to suggestions.

I think the best directors have to be like that. Steven is the same way. He was always open to input on *E.T.*, about scene changes or whatever or how she would do this or that. All your best directors—like Altman—always sit down and create the film as a group. That's what, in essence, the creative experience should be—everyone's best input. Yes, I appreciated Lewis very much. He came in with almost an impossible task and he really worked, night and day, to keep up with it.

We shot five weeks in that car, you know—and there is not one shot that is the same! It's very difficult to devote that much film to a such an enclosed area. I mean, when they saw that shot in America, where the camera spins around and around inside the car, they just couldn't figure out that was done.

And now you're going to tell us, I hope.

It was a breakaway car. We had two cars. On one of them, the left and right sides would come off. The front of the car came off, too, so they could shoot us. And the top would also come off.

Chris: But it was a breakaway car, we wouldn't see the interior of all the car in that shot.

Dee: No, they had that section in the roof which came out. They put the camera down through there and... spun it around.

Chris: Oh, I see!

Me, too. What had you shot in the first two days with Peter Medak?

Chris: We hadn't worked with Peter in those two days—and we never did get to work with him.

Dee: A very nice man. But we had just arrived there. To spend five weeks in the foul car; or cars. With air-conditioning inside, I hope? (They both laugh—a touch madly). What are you laughing for? I mean, after five weeks in that car, even forgetting the damned dog, I'm surprised to see you alive and well and enjoying Paris.

Dee: I'm glad you asked that, Tony. We were freezing the whole time.

Freezing?

It was 30 degrees and raining most of the time. It's a testament to the creativity of Jan De Bont, the DP (cinematographer), and Lewis, because the working conditions were... very difficult! Young Danny Pintauro and I were freezing the whole time. They'd spray us down with water to make us look like we were sweating. We'd do the scene. And then, they'd throw blankets over us because it was so cold. We had heaters in the car.

And there I was worried about the kid in the car—

how either of you avoided hydrophobia. Now I hear he was facing freezing to death, not being barbecued.

Danny Pintauro was... amazing! As we say about him, he has a very old soul. I've worked with a lot of children. A lot, as you know. He as just... exceptional. We'd do each scene four or five times and every take in the car is very intense, from one way to the other—he's going into convulsions or whatever. I'd look at him and go, "Danny, the camera's on you now. Remember how we did it this morning? You have to..." And he'd say, "I can't." I'd say, "You have to." And then (she claps her hands) he'd do it, just like that. He was amazing to me.

Also we had a real bond between us from the day we met. Even his own mother looked at us and would swear he was my kid. It was like in another lifetime maybe we were mother and son.

In another lifetime, he might have been your father. You said he had an old soul.

Dee: That's really interesting. I never thought of that. *

What about the dog in the film. I'm completely in the dark about the making of Cujo. You've already surprised me enough, surprise me again—go on tell me it was really a tiger in a dog suit or something. (Laugh.) There were five St Bernards playing Cujo, all of them trained to do different things. All of them extremely heavy! I mean one of the funniest stories I have is during the scene right after the baseball bat, when I trip and he jumps on me. That's a very heavy dog: 210lbs. He'd tranquilise him, quite safely I hasten to add, and tied his muzzle, just in case, with some wire. But I'm scared to death, anyway, because I'm scared to death of guns and I know after this I have to pick up this gun... So, they're getting set. The camera angle is right. And I have this dog on top of me, and I'm hysterical already, and... all of a sudden I hear this growling noise. Well, I took 210 lbs and threw him away five feet... And he was snoring!

I was so into it I thought he was growling. Here's his face right here, inches away. I'd thought he'd woken up, found his muzzle tied and would go for me... It was, in retrospect, very funny. Particularly as they were all saying, "My god, you've hurt the dog!" I was yelling, "Gimme a break, guys!" They were more worried about the dog—because everyone was very conscious of taking great pains not to harm the dogs in any way.

Any more shaggy dog stories?

One of the five dogs was trained to go after what they called The Critter Cage. It had a little piece of fur in it, something that made the dog want to go right after it. So, in the very first scene with the car, when we're trying to get Danny's seat-belt undone, when the dog leaps up for the first time... For that scene, The Critter Cage was placed in the front part of the car, under the dashboard. So, we're doing it from different angles and it's very frightening. This is the first day Danny and I had worked in the car with the dog. And I'd said to him, "Don't worry, I'll never let the dog do anything to hurt you." Because you really do have to have a great deal of trust from a child for scenes like this.

So, we're working, working, scared to death and Danny's really screaming. He's very frightened because the dog is not only very big, it's very loud. They move the camera around, and say they need the window down just a little bit to see the dog better and I'm saying, "I don't know, guys, we're very frightened in here." So, they put it down just a little bit. That dog was so strong that with his paws, he pushed the whole window all the way down... I got that kid out of there in seconds! Of course, they kept saying, "The dog won't be coming after you!" which we understood. He wanted that Critter Cage and he

was going to do anything to get to it! So we had a few harrowing moments. Most of them were funny, though, like when the dog comes to attack the window at the end. That's very funny. They've been trained and trained and trained for that scene. It's very hard for the actors, you're having to be hysterical, the camera is real close and you have to maintain the performance, which is the highpoint of the film, because the kid has just come back to life and all that, and we have the dog crash through the window on cue. So, they had a ramp leading to the window for the dog to charge up on. I'm inside and I'm going, "Oh, Oh, my kid, my kid," the dog would run up the ramp... and then just look in and kinda go, "No way man!" We went through that sequence twenty times—2½ hours. They were doing everything to get this dog to crash through the window. Chris: They even, almost as you suggested before, brought in a German shepherd...

Dee: Oh, that was hysterical!

Chris: He was trained for it. This is what this dog did. He went through windows. And they put him in...

Dee and Chris together: ...a St Bernard suit!

Dee: You've never seen anything like it. Between takes, they'd take the head off, right?



Chris: And you'd have this St Bernard walking around with a German shepherd's head!

Sounds like a perfect Dee Wallace movie. The Beast With Two Heads.

Chris: But he would not go through. Because of the suit. When he ran, the head would slip, the eye-holes moved and he didn't know where he was going, so he'd screech to a halt. Another dog they used, came running full tilt at the window, then stopped looked at it and just pushed at it with his nose.

It's sounds like Tom and Jerry time.

Dee: Oh it was! Although while we were doing it, we were ready to kill.

Chris: We saw the dailies (rushes) of this dog in slow motion, pushing at the window with his nose. The out-takes are just...

Dee: Hilarious! Danny is going, "I can't do it anymore!" I'm going, "I can't do it anymore!"

Chris: And the dog is growling, "I can't do it anymore!"

Or not at all!

Dee: Oh, it was the worst. We just left the set that night almost dead. I mean, they treated me for exhaustion for two months after the film.

Are you happy in the fantasy genre, Dee?

I'd very much like to do a relationship film like Kramer or Norma Rae. I'd like that very much but I always... it's funny as you say that, and when you

listed all those animal films, I'm sitting here thinking, My God, he's right. It had never really occurred to me. I always go for the part.

Fantasy is no bad thing; in fact, today it is about the only act in town.

I don't think it's bad as long as it's creatively done well; and does something for your career. I wouldn't make a choice because of that. I would not do another horror film. That's why we were so adamant about this one.

So you do call The Howling a horror film?

Oh sure! It was tongue-in-cheek but still in the horror genre. But you see when I read E.T. when I read Mary, she was so real to me that I never really considered it a fantasy film, you know what I mean? I tend to go towards the character and the material. I don't care which genre it is in. I want to do films. That's what my goal is. Like, I've just finished a wonderful movie for television in America, Happy, with Dom DeLuise. That'll be a cinema feature in Europe. That's a very much a relationship film. It really is.

Chris: A nice relationship film and very much in the Hitchcock style.

Have you got more plans as a twosome?

Dee: We've written a project that we're hoping to do together.

Chris: Which is a fantasy.

Dee: Well, Chris has written it.

Chris: It's a comedy fantasy of time travel back to the 14th Century, a combination of all the old swash-bucklers. Remember the old Burt Lancaster films, The Crimson Pirate (1952) and The Flame and the Arrow (1950)?

The stuff with Nick Cavat!

Chris: Yeah, exactly. That's what we're doing and yet—as a comedy.

Dee: If E.T. is this genre's answer to the Wizard of Oz, well this is...

Chris: A tribute to those swashbucklers, done in a very light vein. They were light, too, but ours will have the added dimension of time travelling.

Sounds more like A Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1949)...

Chris: Right, right. More updated, of course; Dee will be very much a feminist in it and learns quite a bit in the old days.

What are you calling it?

Chris: Once Upon A Time.

Dee: But to fully answer your question, we don't usually go around looking for things to do together.

The Howling, they brought to me and they were having a difficult time casting the rest of it. I had this big meeting with the director (Joe Dante) and he said, "We just can't find anyone to play your husband." I said, "Well, I know this actor who I think would be perfect for it." I gave them Chris' name and his agent's name, they called him in and he got the part—and then they found out we were engaged.

When Dan Blatt called with Cujo, I said, "Well, you know that Chris always reads all my scripts." Dan said, "Well, have him read it for himself because we want him to play Kemp." So we've been very fortunate that things have come to us. We never go out and say: "We're only going to work together." Chris: But if the right project comes along, great! Dee: But we do always try to be together. If he has to go on location, I always go with him and vice-versa. Sounds the right concept...

*Footnote: Dee Wallace obviously loved my reincarnation theory about young Danny. Once on the American promotional, I notice she said in a Washington Post interview: "Somebody on the set said that if Danny and I had been together in another life, he would have been my father. He's that wise." Glad to have been of help, Dee.



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UNDERWATER FOLLIES

A Look at Hollywood's Ventures into Deep Water by John Brosnan

It was an unusually absurd moment in a series that consisted of nothing but absurd moments, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*: an enemy submarine was dosing fast on the Seaview and the "Emergency Stations" call was ringing through the ship. The five or six extras that the budget could stretch to that particular week were running back and forth in front of the camera trying to look as if they knew what they were doing, and one of them, I noticed, had drawn his .45 out his holster and was waving it about...

What, I wondered, did he intend doing with it? I mean, what can you do with a hand-gun in a submarine? Then I remembered it was an Irwin Allen production and that the crewman was probably on his way to open a port-hole and take pot shots at the enemy submarine...

Irwin Allen, more than most other film makers, has worked hard to create a completely false picture of the underwater world, and yet, ironically, he won an Academy Award in 1953 for his documentary based on Rachel Carson's famous book *The Sea Around Us*. Obviously whatever he learned about the sea during the making of that film he has carefully managed to avoid using in any of his subsequent underwater productions. Why, I don't know but I suspect he's of the opinion that authenticity would just bore his audiences so why not just give them any old load of rope. Long as it's colourful with lots of action they won't know the difference...

He took this formula to its limit in *City Beneath the Sea*, the pilot for another underwater TV series which fortunately was never made. Released as a feature film in the UK in 1971 with the title *One Hour to Doomsday* it was an incoherent jumble of sub-plots and typical Allen looniness. Set in the 21st Century in a domed city on the ocean floor it concerned a typical day in the life of the inhabitants. Their problems included the possibility that a super H-bomb will be exploded somewhere in the city by an 'unfriendly foreign power' (a favourite Irwin Allen euphemism); that a sea monster will break through the city's defences; that the city's governing body will be overthrown by subversives; that a shipment of gold from Fort Knox will be stolen; and that a giant asteroid will crash into the sea above the city...

I saw this at a London cinema in the early 1970s but I honestly can't remember how all these problems were resolved. By the end of the movie I probably didn't care... (no doubt the asteroid missed the city but landed on top of the undriendly foreigners, the political subversives, the gold robbers and the sea monster, after the latter had swallowed the super H-bomb of course).

But I do remember how awful the sets and special effects, all designed for TV, looked on the big screen. In some scenes you could easily see that the computers and futuristic instrument consoles were constructed clumsily out of pieces of wood but my favourite sequence was the one where some men are trying to repair a leak in the city wall and are seen struggling helplessly against a trickle of water apparently coming from an off-screen garden hose.

Irwin Allen isn't the only Hollywood film maker to have taken advantage of the public's ignorance about underwater matters. And it's surprising just how ignorant most people still



Above: All dressed up and ready for action. The deep sea explorers of *Mysterious Island*. Left: The famous publicity art for Steven Spielberg's first monster hit, *Jaws*. Below: In *Worlds of Atlantis* a boat is attacked by an horrendous rubber octopus. Opposite page, top: The impressive submarine, *The Nautilus*, from Walt Disney's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Centre: *The Nautilus* again, this time resembling an upturned bath-tub, in the original 1916 version of *20,000 Leagues*. Bottom: It came from *Beneath the Sea* featured this six-tentacled octopus, animated by Ray Harryhausen.



are on the subject; in fact I would guess that the average person knows more about outer space than he/she does about the world beneath the surface of our oceans.

I realized the extent of my own ignorance when I started researching my novel *The Midas Deep* which revolves around an expedition to mine manganese nodules on the deep sea bed. I think the problem is that we tend to be over-influenced by all those underwater TV documentaries and films that are shot in coastal areas, ie, shallow water. All that bright light, coral reefs, the water teeming with different types of fish, scuba divers etc, and yet these images hold true for only a tiny fraction of the oceans' vast areas. It's like saying that an oasis is typical of the Sahara desert...



To begin with, the oceans are deep; so deep that most of the sea-bed is still off-limits to Man and his machines, with the exception of a few special underwater vehicles. The majority of Man's underwater exploits, such as the drilling for oil in the North Sea, take place on the continental shelves. Now the shelves can extend down as far as 5,000 feet below the surface but when you consider that the huge Abyssal Plains of the Pacific sea bed slope from around 16,000 feet all the way to a depth of 28,000 feet (that's over five miles!) you begin to realize that Man is still playing in the shallows.

Another of the things that surprised me while researching *The Midas Deep* was that submarines can't go very deep at all. All those shots of the *Seaview* submarine crash-diving

to the bottom of the sea in the Irwin Allen shows are just so much nonsense. Even the latest breed of giant nuclear-powered submarines such as America's Ohio (560 feet long) can't go much deeper than 3,000 feet.

The fact is that conventional submarines are pretty inefficient as deep water vessels and the reason for this is the shape of their pressure hulls (that's something else you'd never have learned from watching *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*; that subs have an inner and outer hull). These are always of a cylindrical shape and unfortunately the cylinder is not an ideal shape for the withstanding of pressure, of course, is the chief obstacle in trying to descend to any great distance below the sea.

For example, at a mere 2,000 feet the pressure is 853 pounds per square inch, and at 16,500 feet, the average depth of the Pacific, the pressure is a staggering 3 tons per square inch. If even the huge Ohio was to descend that far its pressure hull, as thick as it is, would collapse...

There are vessels that can go that deep, and deeper, but they have spherical pressure hulls (the sphere is the ideal shape for resisting water pressure). These vessels are usually called 'submersibles' and tend to be much smaller than submarines. The reason they can't be very big is because of the weight of their pressure hulls. To withstand such enormous pressures they have to be made of very thick metal and are therefore very heavy. And the more the metal sphere weighs the harder it is to achieve a fixed buoyancy (ie, stop it from sinking like a lead weight). For example, Auguste Picard's famous steel bathyscaphe (a forerunner to the modern submersible), which descended more than 7 miles into the Pacific's Marianas Trench in 1960, needed a buoyancy tank containing 70 tons of petrol to support a pressure hull large enough for only two people (whereas conventional subs use air in their buoyancy tanks submersibles use oil or gasoline — both lighter than water — because of the greater pressure at the depths they operate in).

One solution to the weight problem that scientists came up with in recent years was to build the pressure hulls out of glass... Good Lord, I hear some of you cry in amazement, the *Seaview* sub had a glass nose! Did Irwin Allen actually get something right, if only by accident?

Well, no, he didn't. Those big windows in the front of the *Seaview* wouldn't have lasted very long during even a shallow dive. Glass pressure hulls have to be spherical in shape in order to be pressure resistant. And in fact there's almost no limit to the amount of compression a sphere made of glass can withstand — the deeper you take one underwater the stronger it gets.

Some submersibles have already been built with glass pressure spheres but again there's a limit to the size they can be made, unfortunately. Apparently it's impossible to mold a large glass sphere without a flaw developing, and any such defect means a weak point that could collapse under pressure. So it's back to the drawing board...

The *Nautilus* submarine in the Disney version of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* had large glass ports in its conning tower, as well as a large, circular viewing port in the side of its hull, which would have made it as unseaworthy a submarine as the *Seaview*. And like the *Seaview*, the *Nautilus* appears to lack a pressure hull, as is obvious in the scenes where we see Nemo and his men still in the conning tower even when the *Nautilus* is submerged (submarine conning towers are outside the pressure hulls and are always free-flooded when the vessel is underwater).

But who cares? The *Nautilus* is such a great looking submarine I'm prepared to overlook all of its design faults, just as I'm prepared to ignore the weak bits in the movie itself (on the other hand I'm not prepared to forgive Irwin Allen anything).

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea remains my favourite underwater film and made a great impression on me when I first saw it way back in the mid-1950s. It's one of a small group of films that imprinted themselves on my mind (I think you have to be a specific age for movies to have that affect on you) and have been reverberating through my emotions ever since. In a sense my novel *The Midas Deep* is a homage to *20,000 Leagues*; I've even included a brief encounter with a giant squid, and my chief villain is a modernised Captain Nemo, though unlike Nemo there are no attractive aspects to his character... times have changed, alas).

Amusingly, the only thing that disappointed me about the movie when I saw it as a small boy was that the big moment promised by the title never arrived. Not knowing that a league equals about 3 miles I was waiting for the *Nautilus* to dive 20,000 leagues straight down...

The first version of *20,000 Leagues* was made in 1916 and involved the expertise of two pioneering underwater cameramen, Ernest and George Williamson. They had developed the first efficient technique for filming underwater by means of a spherical diving chamber made of steel which had one thick porthole. The sphere was suspended from a barge by a tube made of removable metal sections which were wide enough for a man to climb through. Air was pumped down the tube from the barge and the whole thing was sufficiently strong for the sphere to be lowered to a depth of 80 feet.

Shooting in the clear water of the Bahamas the Williamson brothers obtained a lot of unique footage, for that time, of underwater life. For the audiences of 1916 it was their first look at underwater creatures in their natural habitat and these sequences attracted most of



the attention from both public and press (the film was also helped by the fact that its release coincided with the news that a German U-boat had slipped through the blockades and sunk some British ships outside of New York, thus stirring up the public's interest in submarines). Ironically, the sequence that cause the most excitement – a fight between a couple of divers and a large octopus – was a cheat. Because of the audiences' dislike of film "fakery" in those days (what we would call "special effects") the makers of *20,000 Leagues* claimed that the octopus was real. But it was not until 20 years later that Ernest Williamson admitted, somewhat shamefacedly, that the octopus had been constructed out of rubber and operated from within by a hard-hat diver...

After the success of *20,000 Leagues* Williamson wanted to make *Mysterious Island* but it was not until 1926 that he finally interested an Hollywood studio, MGM, in the project. MGM, however, had ideas of their own about the story. For one thing, they wanted all the characters to be Russian, even Captain Nemo...

Williamson accepted these changes and went to the Bahamas with his crew to shoot the location material, but no sooner had they arrived than most of their boats and equipment were destroyed in a hurricane. Despite this major setback Williamson was soon at work but other problems were awaiting him back in Hollywood – it seemed that MGM couldn't make up its mind about the film's basic content and continued to change the story around. Directors came and went, as did leading members of the cast, which meant that material had to be re-shot endlessly. Altogether it took nearly 4 years and a million dollars to complete the film.

For some reason Captain Nemo's name had been changed to Count Dakkar (played by Lionel Barrymore). Dakkar has an island base where he and his men are working on an experimental submarine. The Russian government hears about the project, invades the island, capture Dakkar but are too late to seize the sub which has left on a trial voyage. Eventually Dakkar and his surviving assistants escape in another submarine and descend to the bottom of the sea. Donning heavy suits they start to explore the sea bed, encountering not only the mandatory giant octopus but an undersea "dragon" (a photographically enlarged lizard) too. They also discover a race of creatures that resembles Donald Duck's nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie. These underwater scenes were achieved by a combination of Williamson's Bahamas material and a lot of footage shot "dry" in the studio. For example, the little duck creatures were midgets who "swam" about the studio with the aid of piano wire...

Mysterious Island, though very silly, was a pretty spectacular movie for its time but in spite of this, and some good reviews, it died a death at the box office. The reason being that in the 4 years it took to be made it was overtaken by a new technological development – Sound. Even with hastily added sound effects it was still regarded as an old fashioned silent film by the public when it was released in 1930 and sank without a trace.

In the years since then there have been many films with underwater themes. Most of them have fallen into two categories, one being the submarine movies set in World War 2 like *Run Silent, Run Deep*, *Cash Dive*, *We Dive at Dawn*, *Destination Tokyo*, *The Boat* etc; the other being what one could describe as "salvage" movies. The latter inevitably revolve around a sunken wreck containing something valuable and include such films as *Reap the Wild Wind*, *Wake of the Red Witch*



(both of these starred John Wayne and, unless my memory deceives me, he fought a giant squid in each of them), *The Wreck of the Mary Deare*, *Thunderball*, *The Deep*, *For Your Eyes Only* and *Raise the Titanic*.

There have been a few underwater films that don't fit into either category, like the remake of *Mysterious Island* in 1961, the atrocious *Around the World Under the Sea* (that had Lloyd Bridges, from the old Sea Hunt TV series, Shirley Eaton and David McCallum travelling around the world in an unlikely submersible while trying to deposit a network of undersea earthquake detectors on a budget that barely covered the costs of Ms Eaton's hairdresser), the even more atrocious *The Neptune Factor* (a Canadian underwater disaster area featuring giant fish courtesy of a hand-held magnifying glass), the disappointing *Captain Nemo and the Underwater City*, *Ice Station Zebra*, *The Poseidon Adventure* (one of Irwin Allen's more entertaining productions), *The Warlords of Atlantis*, *Grey Lady*

Down and, of course, *Jaws* (and let's not forget all those cheap 1950s sf/horror movies that led up to *Jaws*, such as *The Creature From the Black Lagoon*, *It Came from Beneath the Sea* and *The Monster that Challenged the World* – the latter, one of my favourites, was about giant underwater snails).

But one thing that most of the above movies had in common was a tendency to present the depths as a place where there is more illumination than a flood-lit football pitch. You would never guess from watching the typical submarine drama that sunlight doesn't penetrate the water much past 200 feet and from then on downwards it gets very dark. Pitch black, in fact.

Water inhibits the movement of all forms of electromagnetic radiation which means neither light nor radio waves can travel far underwater (if you ever see anyone in a sub movie sending or receiving a radio message when the sub is deep underwater then you know that the scriptwriter hasn't done his

homework). Even under the best natural lighting conditions, visual range is never more than 100 feet. And in deep water, where there's no natural light, even the most powerful floodlights don't penetrate the gloom much more than 30 feet.

One movie that *did* indicate just how dark it was in deep water, and how difficult it is to operate submersibles in such inhospitable regions, was *Raise the Titanic*, the movie that sunk Lord Love Grade. On a technical level *Raise the Titanic* was, in my opinion, quite impressive. Unfortunately it had a plot as brainless as a deep water sea mollusc. Credit and blame for both goes to the author of the original novel, Clive Cussler, who obviously knows a lot about underwater technology but has more than a little trouble in coming up with logical storylines, believable characters, convincing dialogue, etc (not that his readers seem to mind). The thing that most troubles me about Cussler is that he's named his hero Dirk Pitt. I mean, good grief, what a stupid name for a hero: "Hi, my name is Pitt. Dirk Pitt. And this is my brother, Arm..." (Not that I can criticise him - my hero in *Skyhawk* was called Michael Colino and I subsequently discovered that Colino means 'vegetable strainer' in Italian).

Ironically, when *Raise the Titanic* came out several critics moaned that the underwater scenes were "too dark". What hope is there, one wonders, in trying to get audiences to accept authenticity in underwater movies when the critics themselves display such ignorance (the same critics would no doubt complain if they saw an outer space movie that lacked sound effects).

And I guess one can't blame film makers for not being too clued-up on deep water matters when even scientists are still only scratching the surface, so to speak. It's quite remarkable

how little is known about the deep seabed even though it covers a large part of our planet. Things are changing as more submersibles are built and used to explore the sea bottom (there is also, unfortunately, an increasing military interest down there, which is the main theme of *The Midas Deep*) but there is still a great deal yet to discover.

For example, until a few years ago it was generally believed that the deep seabed was a relatively lifeless place but that impression is rapidly being proved false as more and more submersible expeditions are carried out. One such recent expedition made a discovery that came as a complete surprise to scientists all over the world - some geologists investigating an underwater fault line in the earth's crust in a submersible near the Galapagos Islands came across a remarkable colony of sea creatures previously unknown to Man.

The colony extended around a geothermal vent in the seabed and scientists later discovered that these unique creatures used the chemicals in the hot water coming out of the vent as their sole source of energy, unlike all other life forms on earth which depend either directly or indirectly on sunlight.

Many of the vent creatures are very bizarre, such as the giant tube worms that are blood red in colour, are over 6 feet in length and have no mouth or stomach - they absorb their 'food' directly through their skins.

Since then similar vent colonies have been discovered and they are apparently a typical feature in areas of the seabed where there is a lot of geothermal activity. This leads one to wonder what else is waiting to be discovered down there. Perhaps some of those creatures that populated the Hollywood sf movies of the 1950s will turn out not to have been so far-fetched after all - like Ray Harryhausen's giant octopus in *It Came From Beneath the Sea*. It used to be thought the giant octopus

was a myth but a few years ago the remains of a large sea creature washed up on a beach in Florida in 1897, and since then preserved in the Smithsonian Institute, were re-examined by a scientist. He found that the tissue, originally believed to have come from a squid, was actually from a large octopus. A very large octopus. From tentacle to tentacle he would have measure nearly 200 feet. . .

No doubt when a living specimen of such a creature is found Irwin Allen will be immediately on hand with a Hollywood contract.

Which is more than I can expect on *The Midas Deep*. Columbia Pictures asked to see the manuscript last year and returned it with the words that it would be impossibly expensive to film. I suspect that the spectacular failure of the 30 million dollar *Raise the Titanic* has turned film companies off the idea of making any more underwater epics for the time being. . .

Then again perhaps I could interest good ol' Irwin Allen in the project if I make a few changes to it. . . Irwin baby, how about if I put big bay windows into the front of my giant submersible? French windows? Okay, sure, French windows it will be. . . Light? Oh yes, there'll be a lot of light on the sea bottom, I promise. The audiences will be dazzled everytime they look at the screen. What? The squid? What happens to him? Well, in the book he just swims away. No, not very exciting, I agree. Hmmm? Shoot him? Have a sailor shoot him with a .45 automatic? Great idea, Irwin! Hey, the sailor could shoot him through the French windows! Yes, I thought you'd like that. . .

Hollywood, here I come. . . and to hell with principles.

(*The Midas Deep* will be published by Hamlyn Paperbacks later this year.)



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3-D: NOW

Feature by Tony Crawley

The '50s are back. And 3-D with 'em. But I mean, really back. The same movies, if not (quite) the same movies. . .

In 1953, the tyrannical tycoon boss of Columbia, Harry Cohn, suspended shooting of an Edmond O'Brien and Audrey Totter thriller called *Man in the Dark*. He created Columbia on the wrong side of the Hollywood tracks and he ran it like a tight ship or Alcatraz, depending upon which side of his bombastic temper you were. He didn't need a committee. He gave his own orders. He wanted a re-write of this movie – and by yesterday. Then, the film began all over. In 3-D.

The idea was to beat Warner Brothers' *House of Wax* into the cinemas.

Thirty years on a genresque movie (and that's being generous as it's more spacy than sf) is halted in mid-shoot by its Canadian producers. It's called *Adventures in the Creep Zone*. The entire project goes through a re-think of script, style, title and director and gets turned into a biggish 3-D caper. And which studio picks up what is now *Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone*, but Columbia. The studio rushes the film out in the finest Harry Cohn traditions, too.

The idea? Why, to beat *Jaws 3-D* to the starting blocks, of course.

Hollywood is as Hollywood was.

Whether or not 3-D is here to stay around longer than usual this time – and after this all important year of 1983-D – I can't say. Nor can anyone in the industry I've quizzed about it. "Let's wait until the summer is over," all but chorused at Cannes. One thing is clear. For the moment, 3-D is definitely here. Again. For now.

In the end, as with any season of new releases, everything depends on the movie. The future of 3-D, therefore, is not in our hands, but those of the film-makers'. Their good movies (usually) win. Their rubbish is scented, then shunted aside.

THINGS TO COME

In the first hot flushes of 3-Dementia since 1981, more than sixty movies have been announced for the 3-D works. If I had a pound for every film I've heard/seen/read/reported as "announced", I could be making my own 3-D movies, or better still investing in a definitive camera system that everyone else would use and have to pay me for.

So, not all those sixty movies have been made, nor even funded, surprise, surprise.

Thirteen, at least, come to mind as being finished and, for the most part, released: *Abacadabra*, *Amityville 3-D*, *Bungalo*, *Friday The 13th Part III*, *Hot Her*, *Jaws 3-D*, *Metalstorm*, *Parasite*, *Rottweiler*, *Spacehunter*, *The Treasure of the Four Crowns*, *The 3-D Movie*, *Sexalibur*.

Ten more that I know of are in various stages of pre-production or actual shooting: *Escape From Beyond*, *Journeys Through The Darkzone*, *Lion Man*, *The Lost Empire*, *Parasite II*, *Return of the (Living) Dead*, *Space Patrol*, *Space Vampire*, *Swordkill*, *Tales of the Third Dimension*.

Of my main breakdown of twenty-three movies, six only as made by or released through major studio combines. Three of the others derive from Australia, Canada and Japan. Tony Anthony, the guy responsible for the 3-D turnaround, produces and stars in two more. Earl Owensby, North Carolina's self-styled Orson Welles, is responsible for two more.

But the real clamp of the movement is Charles Band. He has two out (*Parasite* and *Metalstorm*) and three more in production: *Darkzone*, *Parasite II* and *Swordkill*. "3-D is marketable now", Band tells us, "and I believe it will be for quite a while." Even so, he makes sure his films can be released flat, when and where necessary. Same as in the '50s.

Obviously not all of these films are good. Either in 3-D effects (there are few qualified experts around), scripting, production values, thespian abilities or directorial expertise. They are, for the main part, your average, everyday, drive-in exploitation movies, using 3-D in an attempt to win some of the overflow from the *Jedi*, *Superman III* and *Octopussy* queues. Their makers are simply trying to stay alive.

But for every piece of schlock from Earl Owensby, there is, at least, the intriguing prospect of Richard Fleischer returning to the medium he last used thirty years ago with *Arena*.

The films made, and being made, all use differing "breakthrough" techniques and equipment, old and new. Not to mention their "experts", also old and new. Some films both hit and miss in the utilisation of their only gimmick. Others plainly miss altogether. The hits, as we know, are few and far between.

3D ROOTS

3-D, itself, is as old as moving pictures. The first stereoscopic experiments date back to the end of the 19th Century – 1897.

Even as the moving pictures began to work their magic on our grandparents, the projection of stereoscopic still photos was a popular fad. Some preferred the stills to the movies; the quality was usually better. Soon after 1900, 3-D film systems began to be patented in Europe, mainly in Britain and France; and,

naturally, in America. Few processes worked and nothing much was done with any that (almost) did. Abel Gance even shot some of his legendary *Napoleon* (1927) in one system, but felt it would distract audiences, too much, so cut it out.

The '20s roared in, bringing a few extra advances, the first of many revivals in 3-D interest, and then roared back out again. The style of the genre was set back then. 3-D is always being revived, about every other decade, like the economy – and with similar dire results. The films have a certain curiosity value, nothing more. By the end of the silent era, it's thought that some 200 differing 3-D movie notions had been patented, tried, tested and flung out – and for the same reasons as in the '50s and today. Not enough cinemas were equipped to show the films.

Too many systems, though. "In some," says film historian Ephraim Katz, "the images were shown on the screen side by side and converged into one when viewed through a special device; in others, two images appeared on the same frame, separated by a distance identical to that separating the human eyes; in still others, two images were alternately projected on the screen with a shutter device. Then there was the anaglyph colour process in which red and green images fused into a single image in depth when viewed through red and green glasses."

MGM came out with the red-green glasses system in 1935, otherwise 3-D really only surfaced again – with bad timing – at the New York World's Fair of 1939. (Today, it still retains that kind of freak show connotation, with Murray Lerner's *Journey Into The Imagination* sort, showing at Kodak's pavilion at Disney's new EPCOT fair.)

Back in 1939, due to the war the gimmick died once more. Another war brought it back. Hollywood's pitched battle royale with television. Filmgoers were staying home to watch Milton Berle and Ed Sullivan. Something had to be done to win ticket-buyers back to the box-office.

A terrible movie called *Bwana Devil* (1952) supplied the answer by dusting off 3-D and bringing it back, more or less alive. Bad film. Awful reviews. Fast profits for United Artists. Arch Oboler was the writer-producer-director. A former radio guy, he went in for stunting and supernatural(ish) movies like *Bewitched* (1945) and *The Womack* (1953). His star was Robert Stack, who, ironically, then turned around and joined the enemy, starring in tv's *The Untouchables* for four years (117 hours) from 1959.

THE RETURN OF 3D

Time passed, and the world had forgotten about the arcane practices of the ancient film-makers. Cardboard glasses and the headaches they caused had been purged from public memory. Until an Italian calling himself Tony Anthony popped up and started the



dimensional dementia all over again. His spaghetti western, *Comin' At Ya!* shot in polarised colour 3D, was successful enough to make other film-makers sit up and take notice. Anthony played the hero. He must have enjoyed himself because he turned up starring in another 3D effort, a Raiders rip called *Treasure of the Four Crowns*, as J.T. Striker. And his next project in another 3D-er, *Escape from Beyond*, a space opera.

Early reports from the States gave the impression *Comin' At Ya!* was into *Star Wars* business. Rubbish! It was big enough for the first 3-D film around for zonks, but it could have been real huge. Same old complaint. The cinemas were ill-equipped and didn't feel like shelling out for 3-D lenses, glasses and the rest. Not for just one film.

Being a victim of that lapse in cinema thinking has since made Tony Anthony

rich. By developing a projection lens to help him view 3-D rushes better, he has come up with the only lens that's compatible with all current 3-D systems. For instance, his Western was shot in Optima II-Dimensionscope. His *Treasure* used what he dubs SuperVision. Both films can be projected from the same machine – with his Parallax Corporation lens on it. So can *Jaws 3-D*, *Amityville 3-D*, and the rest.

With *Treasure of the Four Crowns* – more of a 3-Demo film than any cracking storyline – Anthony and his American partners, Marshall Lupo and Gene Quintano, are convinced their L-A-Q Productions have the best 3-D camera. They made their western with the best they could muster – “strictly an experiment”, says Anthony. While in America for its opening, they started scouting around the newer US 3-D

offerings. They later sent director Baldi over for six months to try them out. Result: they settled on the Marks 3-D pic converter system. It was in the prototype stage when they found it. With L-A-Q financing and input from Ariflex, which built the unit, they said – like all people with a different system say – it was the best. The ultimate. Good enough for Paramount to make use of during *Friday The 13th Part III*.

The *Friday* producers have lately become more interested in the new Sirus II cameras, using Mitchell movement. They used it for *Friday*'s credits and coupled with computers, made it perfect for their upcoming, untitled space comedy.

The *Friday* cameraman, Eric Van Haren Norman, moved on to supervise photography for *Jaws 3-D* using a new split-lens camera – Ariflex's new ►



1. The villain, Overdog, from the new 3-D adventure, *Spacehunter*. 2. The stars of *Jaws 3-D* get themselves wet. 3. One of the strange vehicles from *Spacehunter*. 4. A scene from *Charles Band's Metalstorm*. 5. An atmospheric scene from *Spacehunter*. 6. The insane cult leader from *Treasure of the Four Crowns* and victim. 7. *Attack of the Parasite* (in 3-D of course). 8. A clean cut all-American girl is about to meet a clean cut all-American axe murderer in *Friday the 13th Part 3*. 9. *Batpeople*, from *Spacehunter*. 10. The hero of *Spacehunter*, Wolff (Peter Strauss). 11. The mini-sub and crew from *Jaws 3-D*.



3



Arivision affair. And I mean, brand-new for 3-D – just as director Joe Alves and his chosen cameraman Jim Contner were. The Arivision system wasn't even ready until two weeks after shooting began, so everything was shot again. Neither man wanted a solo or duo-camera.

Ironically (or is it, financially?), Universal didn't make *Jaws 3-D*. It allowed Alan Landsburg Productions to make it, independently, and then picked it up (naturally) for release. The irony being that Universal was all set to beat even Tony Anthony into creating the big comeback when considering making *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* in 3-D in 1979. That's when Jane Wagner was due to direct. When her *Moment By Moment* came out and sank Travolta, Lily Tomlin and herself, Jane left and John Landis came in. He immediately said he wanted nothing to do with 3-D. When he left

(talking about re-doing *Creature From the Black Lagoon* in 3-D!), Joel Schumacher shoot *Woman* flat.

The story goes that a Universal chieftain felt 3-D could never work its old magic again. "Nobody", he said, "would ever sit through a 3-D movie for 90 minutes wearing cardboard and plastic glasses."

Was he ever wrong!

But back to technicalities. Lamont Johnson's *Spacehunter* – a flat project until *Friday 3-D* took off – uses the old-fashioned approach of two cameras. They're Panavision and neatly twinned and everything, but that's still a bulky piece of equipment to tote around a film set – all over locations, too.

Charles Band, the real 3-D king of the hour uses the Stereovision, single-camera system. He's tried three or four others, but swears by the system

rejected by Joe Alves on *Jaws 3-D*. "The two-camera idea is really very cumbersome, full of problems," he tells me. "They're so huge they tie you down to just a few kinds of set-up. Surely everyone's using the one-camera system by now. Stereovision is the most efficient – the best around. It's very manageable as far as the size of the lens is concerned. You can put it on and go out and shoot hand-held which, sometimes, is very effective in 3-D."

"Although it is the same lens system as we used in *Parasite*, there have been some major improvements since those days. I mean, the whole technical end of 3-D was really in the Stone Age a few years ago. Now because of all the interest and the motion pictures now being made in 3-D, they've made some quantum leaps – like there's been with special effects. There's still a long way to



go, but the improvement from, say, *Parasite to Metalstorm* is just... amazing!"

I can't necessarily agree with Band, having seen *Parasite* and twenty minutes or so of *Metalstorm*. But he must know what he's talking about. He has about the most knowledgeable 3-D expert on his books, too—Sweden's Mac Ahlberg.

3D EAST

By now, of course, the Japanese are beginning to move in. A movie called *Bungalow* is the first to utilise the Nipponese system known as Ultravision. This is highly praised for its reliability, sharpness, and lowlight capacity—which makes night shooting in 3-D possible. And as most 3-D subjects are creepy, that's necessary.

As a result of this big summer of '83-D,

Charles Band is not alone in realising that many hundreds more cinemas in America and beyond will be equipped with the goods for once. The necessary silver screens. The Parallax lens. And, naturally, the glasses. If the cinemas get set, the rest is in the hands of the film-makers.

First, the quality of the films—from story to acting to photography, the overall general standard of expertise—has got to sharpen up. Some big names have got to take 3-D by the horns and get rid of its freak show image. Among some of those sixty 3-D films announced were piles of instant junk-movies like *Hide and Go Kill*. . . *Exposing Kinky Sex*. . . and *Ripped To Shreds*. That might take the violence out of cassettes and put it back where it belongs, but it doesn't sound as if it'll help 3-D to stick around much longer.

There are some better things around

the corner, though. Spielberg and Scorsese united for the *Little Shop of Horrors* musical and Jerzy Skolomowski's biopic, *Man Out of Time*. Plus certain secret endeavours afoot at Disney and Paramount. . . and Michael Wadleigh's *The Mirror Man*.

But we'll still be left with the damned glasses. I don't know about you, but I do feel a fool wearing them. Turning around and finding myself in a cinema full of other fools, doesn't help me.

Way back in 1941, the Russians opened a movie in Parallax Stereogram which was 3-D minus the specs. Minus anything to replace the silver screen that the film is projected upon—but a polaroid shield of a screen in front of that. One gigantic wrap-around glasses' lens effect, in fact. Sounds interesting.

Let's have the really good films, first, though, huh?

Starburst Review Section

TWILIGHT ZONE - THE MOVIE

A Starburst Film Review
by Phil Edwards

I've nearly always found multi-story films somewhat unsatisfying, prime exceptions being *Dead Of Night* (1946) and the simply superb *Kwaiden* (1964). The format of three or four short stories within the confines of a 90-100 minute movie never really allows for proper development. Rather, they become a series of anecdotes, usually without the benefit of fully-fleshed characters and situations. This can work in an ongoing TV series with continuing characters and storyline. It also indicates at least part of the reason why there have been so few real successes for the anthology format in comparison to series. One exception to this was *The Twilight Zone*, which through its superior writing and the omniscience of Rod Serling, succeeded so magnificently for so long. Now comes the movie version (see *Starburst 62* for full coverage of the making of the movie and the TV show).

Following a brief and amusingly played prologue with Danny Ackroyd and Albert Brooks, written and directed by John Landis, the stories proper commence with Landis's episode. Vic Morrow makes a powerful impression as a racially bigoted man who finds himself plunged into World War 2 occupied Europe, a Jew on the run from Nazi soldiers. Suddenly he's whipped into the Deep South, a victim of the Ku Klux Klan who think he's black. Escaping from them he finds himself in Vietnam, attacked by American troops who see him as a Vietcong guerrilla. Just as suddenly he's back in the Second World War, being shunted off to a concentration camp.

All good dramatic stuff and Landis handles the action scenes well, aided greatly by Morrow's bewilderment and panic at finding himself in the *Twilight Zone*. But ultimately, the downbeat denouement leaves a sense of dissatisfaction. As I mentioned in my *Zone* feature, all references to the helicopter accident which took place during filming have been deleted and it's probably due to this last minute and necessary change in the structure of the story which accounts for the impression that it just tails off, though the new ending carries a punch of its own.

Steven Spielberg's reworking of the *Kick the Can* episode is very much in the director's 'sense of wonder' style which made *E.T.* such a success. Scatman Crothers is delightful as the visitor to an old people's home who, with his magic, transports the old folks back to their childhood through playing the game *Kick the Can*. I found this the most unsatisfactory of the four stories, perhaps through its slightness and overall lightweight whimsy. This is no bad thing in itself of course, but it does sit somewhat uneasily, sandwiched between the other three tales which have a decidedly tougher edge to them.

The story is well acted and the scenes with the children speaking as their adult selves carries conviction - no mean feat when the difficulties in directing children are considered. But then Spielberg is something of a veteran at working with children by now and displays his customary assurance.

I'm inclined to think that had the *Twilight Zone* segment been placed first in line, it may have had more impact - on me at least.

Joe Dante provides a pure visual treat, with a main set which looks like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* as designed by Tex Avery! It's the story of little Anthony (subtly enacted by Jeremy Licht) who is able to make all his wishes come true, including the more nightmarish ones. Dante does a good job of sustaining believability in the (deliberately) two dimensional characters and manages a couple of jolts along the way. A climax in which various cartoon characters explode from a television set is impressive in the special effects department, but actually delivers nothing dramatically. The



code, in which Kathleen Quinlan convinces Anthony to use his extraordinary powers for good is something of a damp squib and, after the clever razzle-dazzle of Dante's direction, comes as a letdown.

Nightmare at 20,000 Feet, directed by George Miller is, along with Spielberg's the most rounded of the quartet. John Lithgow, as an airline passenger terrified of flying is simply superb - all sweat and twitching from the first frame. His horror is compounded when he sees a 'gremlin' out on the wing of the plane, tampering with the engines, and no one will believe him.

With this great central performance and the special effects - the creature is quite disturbing - Miller creates an atmosphere of claustrophobic paranoia and terror through the use of tight close-ups and razor-sharp editing. This fourth segment is genuinely horrific, although as I recall it, the original

Richard Donner directed episode contains more in the way of sudden shock value than Miller's variation. Still, it ends the *Twilight Zone* movie on a high point, with a 'sting in the tail' that I think Rod Serling would have thoroughly approved of.

Overall, it's an entertaining frightwork, slickly made, amusing and scary by turns. If *Twilight Zone - The Movie* is not a complete success, then the fault lies more with the limiting format, not the talent involved. Decidedly worth seeing and far better than *Creepshow*.

With: Dan Aykroyd, Albert Brooks, Vic Morrow, Scatman Crothers, Kathleen Quinlan, Jeremy Licht, Kevin McCarthy, John Lithgow

Dir: Steven Spielberg, John Landis, Joe Dante, George Miller, Sci: John Landis, Richard Matheson, George Clayton Johnson, Mus: Jerry Goldsmith, SFX: Mike Wood, Rob Bottin, Craig Rarden, Prod: John Landis & Steven Spielberg



SPACE HUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE

"Familiar, if lively, formula"
A Starburst Film Review
by John Brosnan

This is a moderately entertaining mixture of *Mad Max 2* and *Escape from New York* done in 3-D. At the start it gives the erroneous impression it's going to be a *real* science fiction movie but once the action gets underway down on the planet of Terra Eleven it quickly settles into a familiar, if lively, formula. Some interesting ideas (old hat to sf readers but possibly novel to film goers) are dropped and the emphasis is switched to basic shoot-'em-up stuff. Still, it's a fast-moving and fairly spectacular 1 hour 29 minutes and much better fun than Columbia's other "quest" movie - *Krull*...

Spacehunter is about this mercenary space adventurer Wolff (Peter Strauss) who heads to Terra Eleven to rescue three ship-wrecked Earth girls. He's accompanied by a beautiful android called Chalmers (Andrea Marcovici) but unfortunately she gets zapped much too early on in the plot. Her female replacement is a "cute" kid called Niki (Molly Ringwald), supposedly a wild scavenger that Wolff picks up in the desert. The film's equivalent of "The Feral Kid" in *Mad Max 2*, the 14 year old Niki is much too cute and sentimental to be the product of such a hostile and ruthless world. Nor does one believe the relationship that develops - sort of - between her and Wolff (neither character behaves in a way that is faithful to their established personalities).

The sentimentalising of Niki and Wolff is apparently just one of the many changes implemented by director Lamont Johnson when he took over from the original director Jean Lefleur (the film was then called *Adventures in the Creep Zone*). From all accounts the first screenplay was much harder and cynical in concept - more along the lines of *A Boy and His Dog*. Johnson also modified the look of the movie, toning down designer Jack Degovia's wilder costumes and machines...

Even so Degovia's art direction remains the most impressive element in the movie (I especially liked the ramshackle 'sailing ship on rails'). Problem is that the 3-D process hinders one's appreciation of the film's sets and weird machines. I kept wishing I could see the film normally, which suggests that *Spacehunter* was a wrong choice for the 3-D process...

But 3-D or not 3-D it's definitely worth a visit. ■

Dir: Lamont Johnson, Scr: Edith Ray & David Preston and Dan Goldberg & Len Blum, Music: Elmer Bernstein, Makeup: Tom Berman, Prod: Dan Carmody, John Dunning and Andre Link.

Peter Strauss (as Wolff), Andrea Marcovici (Chalmers), Molly Ringwald (Niki), Ernie Hudson (Washington), Michael Ironside (The Overdog), Hrant Alianak (The Chemist).

Time: 89 mins

3-D

Cert: PG

KRULL

"A dull, derivative movie idea."

A Starburst Film Review
by Richard Holliss

Films like *Krull* are always the most frustrating to review. They promise so much, yet ultimately deliver so little. After reading Phil Edwards' excellent coverage of the making of the movie, I was looking forward to being knocked out by the visuals, at least. And after visiting the sets at

Pinewood Studios last year I was certain the film had potential.

So what went wrong? Opening the movie with yet another *Star Wars* spaceship shot did nothing to inspire confidence. Then, as soon as the villain's stronghold landed, cracking the earth like the castle in *The Dark Crystal*, I started to play "spot the source material". Freddie Jones put in an appearance as "The Old One" - Obi-Wan Old One, perhaps? He rescues the film's hero, Colwyn (Ken Marshall). Colwyn's job is to defeat The Beast and rescue the princess.

But in a dramatic departure from the established legend, Colwyn finds not a light-sabre but a glaive, a



magical device like a five-pointed boomerang which, when flung, spins through the air decapitating all those foolhardy enough to stand in its path. After a lengthy and boring, though picturesque, climb to a secret cave to claim this neat weapon, Colwyn is warned by the Old One to "use it wisely". That is, show restraint with the weapon till the last reel of the movie, lest its amazing powers enable the goodies to win before the allotted two hours are up.

During the long trek across the planet to find the princess, Colwyn teams up with a band of merciless

cut-throats (all willing to reform!), a young boy, a seer, Ergo the wizard (David Battley) and a "Cyclops of few words" played by Bernard Bresslaw.

When Colwyn confronts the Beast, the ensuing battle is tedious, the dreadful matte work of the spaceship splintering into the sky looks more like the attack of *The Monolith Monsters*. Full marks, though, to Stephen Grimes' set design. And animator Steven Archer's crystal spider which imprisons an ageing Francesca Annis at the centre of its web is one of the film's few highlights.

Working from a silly script by Stanford Sherman,

the makers of *Krull* have concealed the \$35 million it cost to make very well. And when I leave the cinema after disappointing films like this, I wonder why it is that some studio executives display such an inordinate inability to tell a dull, derivative movie idea from a fresh and original one. ■

Dir: Peter Yates, **Scr:** Stanford Sherman, **Visual Effects:** Derek Meddings, **Production Designer:** Stephen Grimes, **Makeup:** Nick Maley, **Produced by** Ron Silverman.

Starring: Ken Marshall (as Colwyn), Lysette Anthony (the Princess), Freddie Jones (the Old One), Bernard Bresslaw (the Cyclops).

CUJO

A Starburst Film Review by Alan Jones

Cujo is a dog. Add another to the list of Stephen King movie adaptations that fail to ignite the screen. *Cujo* has its fair share of predictable shocks but is generally a sad waste of both actress Dee Wallace, who gives a spirited performance, and director Lewis Teague's talents. On the strength of this, Teague obviously needs a strong script, like those provided by John Sayles for *Alligator* and *The Lady in Red*, to excel.

Cujo starts out strangely and rapidly becomes static. Even Teague's visual trickery can't generate interest in the last half hour which consists of Wallace and son Tad trapped in a battered car trying to avoid the St Bernard star of the film who is about as threatening as the dog in the Dulux commercial. King's literary trick of contrasting *Cujo*'s escalating rabidness with the breakdown of Wallace's soap-opera marriage is barely hinted at here and laughable in the treatment of Tad's fear of the dark and subsequent phobic attacks. By changing the focus of King's original, the filmmakers here are barking up the wrong tree.

And of course the ending has been changed to make it more upbeat – something that won't make any difference to *Cujo*'s commercial prospects which, incredible as it may seem, are dire to say the least. It really doesn't stand a dog's chance. ■



Above: The cuddly face of *Cujo*, the rabid dog, as he tries to gain access to Dee Wallace in the latest adaptation of a Stephen King novel, directed by Lewis Teague. Left: The cuddly face of author Stephen King.

DIAL M FOR MURDER

A Starburst Film Review by Alan Jones

Back in 1954, Jack Warner, head of Warner Brothers, insisted Alfred Hitchcock made *Dial M for Murder* in 3D even though the process as an audience grabber was on the wane. Everyone knew at the time it would never be given a wide release in the 3D format, and outside a few key locations, it has rarely been seen. All credit then to London's ICA cinema club for organising a limited run of a newly struck pristine copy of the Hitchcock classic before it had to return to Hollywood vaults.

As you read this, you've missed it – but does it matter, I hear you ask? Well, yes, actually, because at last we can see how Hitchcock adapted the medium to his own ends other than just using it as a cheap gimmick.

The very staginess of Frederick Knott's play about Ray Milland masterminding a foolproof plan to murder Grace Kelly, his adulterous wife, is made an asset. The camera prowls around a very small set allowing striking divisions to be made between the major characters, with such mundane objects as table lamps, to amplify feelings of estrangement. One of the key shots is a close-up of a finger dialling a telephone number. It was achieved by building



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outside props to avoid the inevitable eyestrain that usually accompanies such an effect. Hitchcock's limited use of 3D gimmickry – as exemplified by most of its contemporary trash product – has a point of course. When the celebrated scene of Grace Kelly's near strangulation occurs, it has a clearly defined effect. As Kelly reaches into the audience for the scissors she knows are there somewhere, she is not only providing a 3D shock par-excellence, she is also reaching out for our help. Only Hitchcock could add such a brilliant resonance.

Seeing *Dial M for Murder* in the 3D process was no hardship whatsoever, even though I was seeing it for the umpteenth time because of constant television re-runs. It is probably the only 3D film that truly realises the potential of what such a misused medium can offer a talented director. And probably only Hitchcock could have pulled it off with such flair.



SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

A Starburst Film Review
by Richard Holliss

Based on Ray Bradbury's famous story of an evil carnival that visits a small American town and of the people it affects, Walt Disney Productions latest offering is something of a departure from the film work normally associated with the studio. Unfortunately, Disney's attempt to break new ground with a story not necessarily suited to its usual audience means that *Something Wicked* falls far short of perfection.

Its heroes are two young boys Jim Nightshade (Shawn Carson) and Will Halloway (Vidal Peterson). Both harbour problems of their own, for Jim it is coming to terms with the fact that his father has left home and for Will, the realisation that his father is now an old man incapable of sharing his outlook on life.

Enter Mr Dark (Jonathan Pryce) who preys on their fears, growing stronger as they in return weaken. In desperation the boys confide in Will's father (Jason Robards) of their anxieties about the Carnival. That night, Mr Dark and his accomplice, the Dust Witch (Pam Grier) come to take the boys away for ever.

Competently filmed, even if the obvious matte paintings occasionally give a theatrical look to the scenes of the surrounding countryside and the elaborate town set looks unlined in, *Something Wicked* never really amounts to anything. Jonathan Pryce's portrayal is certainly not menacing enough and the Dust Witch's magic seems somewhat subdued. This is forced on the look of the film mostly by the Disney executives' interference in the smooth running of the production and the director Jack Clayton's failure to punch home the evil, instead opting for a subtle approach in a story that cinematically requires some kind of climax.

One non-Disneyesque scene occurs when the boys are menaced by hundreds of tarantulas and yet even this is a case of dramatic licence as no such scene occurs in the original novel. Ray Bradbury has since reported how pleased he is with the film and that it is a faithful interpretation of his book. Unfortunately, Mr Bradbury may just be making allowances for Disney's handling of the project, as in the past cinema and television has never been very kind to his novels.

For Disney, the film was a financial failure in America and its disappointing box office has meant a few changes in studio management. This is a shame, for *Something Wicked* tries very hard to be a good film, but its not until its viewed for a second time that it begins to make any kind of impact, and I don't think that many audiences will like it enough, to give it that kind of a chance.

Dir: Jack Clayton, **Scr:** Ray Bradbury, **Music:** James Horner, **Production Design:** Richard MacDonald, **SPFX:** Lee Dyer, **Prod:** Peter Vincent Douglas. **Starring:** Jason Robards (as Charles Halloway), Jonathan Pryce (Mr Dark), Pam Grier (Dust Witch), Vidal Peterson (Will Halloway), Shawn Carson (Jim Nightshade).

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by
Barry Forshaw

No genre director divides the opinions of Starburst writers as much as the Italian shockmeister Lucio Fulci – but as one who can find much to admire in his films (with very heavy reservations!) I'll attempt this month to cover those Fulci titles available on Video.

It's probably a little unfair to start with the latest to be issued on video, as *Possessed* (Entertainment in Video) is really Fulci at his worst. Admittedly, Fulci's filmic virtues are in evidence – skilfully judged cutting at close-ups, unsettling placing of characters in frame, Argento-like use of music as a very important element. But they are buried here beneath Fulci's equally ubiquitous faults – ludicrously

jumbled plotting, paper-thin characters and wretched dialogue.

Possessed (not to be confused with the Isabel Adjani *Possession*) is not really characteristic Fulci – no shuffling zombies, little graphic gore, (there is, unfortunately, some evidence of censorship cuts), but rather a vaguely *Exorcist*-style plot of the possession of a young girl by an ancient Egyptian force of evil. Some novel ideas emerge – a character entering the doorway of a New York apartment instantly becomes a staring-eyed corpse on the sands of Egypt – but the hard-to-swallow plot, and a total indifference to the fate of the characters quickly sink any interest. And without the blood-boltered grand guignol of Fulci's other films (zapping blue rays from a sinister amulet being the main special effect), there's little to divert along the way. However, let's be positive and turn to the more rewarding Fulci Fare...

A Lizard In A Woman's Skin (EVC) while by no means a total success, is a fascinating pointer to later ideas in Fulci's more blood-spattered epics. Basically a Hitchcock-style crime thriller set in a jaded "Swinging London" milieu, it has several virtuoso set-pieces, such as a brilliantly shot chase in a deserted church which is almost a text-book example of how to utilize location shooting (as well as demonstrating a lesson Fulci has now apparently forgotten – how one flesh-rending knife thrust can be infinitely more shocking than a full-scale evis-

ceration – the heroine's one ghastly wound in this scene reminds one of the throat-catching jump of Donald Sutherland's death in *Don't Look Now*).

Carol Rambaldi's pre-*E.T.* contribution (mentioned in an earlier Starburst interview with Fulci) has been, regrettably, abbreviated in this cassette: the disembowelled dogs (for which Rambaldi had to produce the synthetic models to save Fulci from outraged legal proceedings) are nowhere to be seen, but this isn't a Fulci "splatter" movie, the difference is less noticeable than between, say, the cut and uncut videos of *Zombie Flesh Eaters*.

And, of course, most people will know Fulci best from the latter film, available on VHS – a grisly Romero-inspired corpse epic that is available on video in two forms – the heavily censored BBFC version (still gory enough!) and what's listed as the "Strong Uncut Version" (where state-of-the-art special effects of dismemberment and carnage will offer a challenge to all but the most stout-hearted!) It's in this film that Fulci's flat, comic-strip narrative grip most flourishes – the plot (Ian McCulloch and Tisa Farrow stumbling through implacable, worm-infested zombie hordes) offers nothing of Romero's claustrophobic image-making, but is powerful enough in its own way. I'd recommend you to rent the uncensored version for two reasons:

1. If you like Fulci at all, you won't balk at the grand guignol, and you'll find it here in spades!
2. Such grisly fun will soon vanish as the Dark

It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

"**K**rull is more romantic than other films of the genre. The characters are more varied than in most sci-fi films. I remember when *Star Wars* came out, and *The Empire Strikes Back*: their technology was so wonderful but I think the characters got pushed a bit below the surface. I think our characters are more colorful, more theatrical and are in a more theatrical story."

Thus spoke *Krull*'s director Peter Yates once upon a time back when the movie was still in production. Perhaps he actually believed what he was saying even though by then he must have read the script and discovered that the characterisation in it was on a level with Bill & Ben's *Fewerpot Men*.

And perhaps the film's producer Ron Silverman really meant it when he said of the scriptwriter Stainford Sherman, "He had the widest imagination of anyone I knew." If so, Mr Silverman must know some pretty unimaginative people for there is little evidence of any imagination in the script of *Krull*, wild or otherwise. But perhaps Mr Sherman had used up all his "wild imagination" in his previous screenplay—the one he wrote for Clint Eastwood's *Any Which Way You Can* (the wildly imaginative remake of *Every Which Way But Loose*).

For *Krull* is an unimaginative patchwork quilt of a movie consisting of warmed over scenes from other fantasy movies: *Dragonslayer*, *The Dark Crystal*, *Hawk the Slayer*, *Thief of Baghdad*, *Conan*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and, of course *Star Wars*. If there are any touches of originality lurking within its predictable storyline I missed them...

But just because a film lacks originality doesn't mean it has to be bad. Look at *Raiders of the Lost Ark*—basically an amalgam of scenes from old movie series but great fun because of the style and sheer verve of the presentation. But there is no verve in *Krull*. On the contrary it is a verveless film.

It moves too slowly. There are too many shots of people travelling; in fact the whole movie is a series of detours. The hero and his band of merry followers are trying to get from Point A to Point B (where the Princess is imprisoned) but find out where Point B is they first have to go to Point C which in turn leads them to Point D and so on to the point of tedium. And while their rescuers are going round in circles the Princess has nothing to do the whole film but run up and down corridors.

Apart from the unimaginative script and the verveless direction the other big thing wrong with *Krull* is that it lacks a sense of place. The world it's set in is a cardboard one. All we see of its inhabitants are some knights and some outlaws; there has been no attempt to try and suggest a world full of different races and cultures, alien creatures etc (apart from the friendly Cyclops and the giant spider). It's as if all the action in *Krull* is being staged against an empty backdrop—which serves to diminish one's emotional involvement in what's happening.

No, despite all the talent, effort and time that went into its making, *Krull* must be considered a failure. It's not a bad movie—it's watchable—it's just not special enough. For a film that's been over two years in the making and at a cost of over 30,000,000 dollars one expects something more than *Krull* delivers.

I have mentioned before within the pages of *Starburst* my forthcoming novel *The Mides Deep*, the book I know all my loyal readers will buy as soon as it's remastered. It may not be a great book but I prided myself on the fact it was the only book to date about manganese nodules

mining...

Well, you can imagine my chagrin and annoyance when I read the following in the *London Standard* recently: "Unknown writers have trouble persuading the likes of Steven Spielberg to read their material. London author Alex Finer, a former colleague on this newspaper, thought he would use the gimmick of fish and a tank of water to get the *Jaws* director to look at the filmic possibilities of his first novel, *Called 'Deepwater'*. It concerns skullduggery over the mining of undersea mineral nodes. Finer thought he would seal a proof copy of the book and bury it beneath fake nodes at the bottom of the tank before delivering the whole thing to Spielberg. ...After two days came a phone call from an aide. 'Mr Spielberg has your fish... would you please have them collected? Fish make him uneasy.' But what about the book? 'Mr Spielberg doesn't read unsolicited material for legal reasons.'"

Alarmed, I rang up the *Standard* to find out when this competitor to *The Mides Deep* was due to be published, and by whom. September was the answer and the publisher was Hutchinsons. That made me even more annoyed. My book isn't due out until November. But the really ironical thing is this: *Mides Deep* will be a Hemlyn Paperback and guess which publishing company recently bought Hemlyn Paperbacks? Yep... Hutchinsons. Little do they know it but they are now publishing two books about deep sea nodules this year...

But enough of this. I've got to go finish stuffing the proof copy of *Mides Deep* into the fake Great White Shark. The delivery men will be here soon to take it round to you-know-who...



Forces of Censorship loom over the video industry.

The Beyond is a slightly different kettle of corpes; here's the increasingly popular "Doorway to Hell" idea given the Fulci touch with standard shuffling zombies. The usual inept dubbing overlays a curiously unreal Louisiana setting, and censorship cuts have reduced the parade of horrors (although, surprisingly, the crucifixion of the hotel manager seems untouched). Still, several atmospheric sequences have to justify the attention of Lucio's admirers.

Despite his statements that he wished to concentrate on generating suspense in *City of the Living Dead* (Inter-light) while playing down the horror aspects, Fulci provides more than enough graphic gore in his follow-up to *Zombie Flesh Eaters*. Certainly there is considerably less full-scale mayhem as the revived dead of Dunwich stalk their hapless victims, but the famous sequence of a girl being "willed" to evacuate her entire inner organs through her mouth scores high in what Stephen King describes as the "gross-out factor", and the zombies' favourite method of dispatching the town's inhabitants—clutching a handful of hair, scalp and brains from the back of peoples' heads—has been (surprisingly) left untouched by the British Censor (while performing excisions elsewhere).

But none of the aforementioned will worry Fulci's fans—nobody who knows his name would watch

one of his films expecting anything less. What will disappoint them—with regard to the video, at least—is the very poor picture quality (the usual bugbear of videos—the incomprehensibility of night scenes—is evident throughout here). The plot and characters are thinner even than Fulci's usual standard—a journalist (Christopher George) leads an investigation that uncovers the opening of a "gateway to hell" (yes, again!) in the ancient town of Dunwich, née Salem. There is an undoubted grand guignol



energy tapped at times, with the usual satisfying atmospheric tracking shots down misty, threatening streets. But it's not Fulci at full throttle—and that we have a right to expect.

While continuing with Alan Jones (in *Starburst* 42) that the climactic sequence of *The House by the Cemetery* (Vampix) is brilliantly sustained. I have to register my continuing doubt that Fulci has any grasp of the importance of structure in genre films. Certainly he has few equals in delivering body-

blows of untrammelled horror, and there's a place for that in an industry over-crowded with no-talent hacks. But it isn't enough to talk about pure, plot-less film (as Fulci does) to excuse cypher-like characters and attenuated story-lines—and if he is going to shore his film up with quotes from Henry James, something more than just dripping entrails, ripped jugulars and decapitations will be needed to justify these aspirations.

Unlike other Fulci films, *The House by the Cemetery* boasts just one zombie—a Frankenstein who is his own monster (justifying, finally the popular confusion between Mary Shelley's monster and monster-maker). And Freudstein's (as he's here called) final assault on the beleaguered family staying in his sinister house certainly generates the expected charnel-house tension—even the usual pointless censorship excisions do not vitiate the film's effect.

But it is a laboured trip to the well-engineered finale, and (again, apologies to Alan Jones) how can you call a character Freudstein without making the slightest psycho-sexual parallel evident? One for Fulci fans only—and, believe it or not—I remain one!

Finally, a brief mention of forthcoming video releases of interest to *Starburst* readers: From Precision Video two episodes of the marvellous *Prisoner: Checkmate and The General*; from Warner, the effects-laden *Tron*; Rank is issuing Hessler's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* and Thorn-EMI has Sykes' visually striking *Demons of the Mind*.

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss

The question is, did *Blake's 7* live up to its original promise? The answer – maybe it did! This month, *TV Zone* takes a look back at the first series and gives some insight into how it came about.

Created for television by the inventor of the Daleks, Terry Nation, the new series was announced in the *Radio Times* as an amalgam of "Galactic Empires, monstrous spaceships, prison planets, androids, interplanetary smuggling and incredibly beautiful girls... if you happen to be a space opera fan, then the BBC socks it to you in the form of *Blake's 7*". (Fanfare and subdued applause.)

A lot of SF fans felt that perhaps the series was jumping on the *Star Wars* bandwagon. After all, apart from *Doctor Who* and *Out of the Unknown*, the Beeb's partnership with science fiction has been one of disappointment. Remember *Moonbase 3*, or the ill-fated *Survivors* (another Terry Nation series)? The biggest problem is always the low, low budgets and rather cardboard looking sets, although at least in the first series of *Blake's 7* the characters reacted with some emotion to the events that occurred around them. With the exception of Vila (played by Michael Keating), who appeared throughout the entire series, most of the cast seemed to take turns in seeing who could remain stoney faced for the longest periods of time. All awards finally going to Avon (Paul Darrow) who hardly ever betrayed the merest hint of a smile.

David Maloney, the show's producer, was quick to point out before its premiere, that *Blake's 7* was in no way a "Crossroads in space". "We've been in production in one way or another for about nine months. We are aware of *Star Wars*, of course, and knew it had hit the jackpot, but we never saw its success as being anything but a good omen."

As all good tv producers, dedicated to their projects, Maloney even turned down the opportunity of flying to New York in order to see *Star Wars* (it hadn't opened in England at that time), and decided the money could be spent instead on, to quote the *Radio Times* "sets, costumes and the kind of superlative models that good TVSF demands." And as the series contained one of the best spaceships ever to grace the tv screens in a British show, no-one would argue the point.

Called the *Liberator*, the spacecraft was filmed against some impressive space sets and looked most effective. Even so Maloney had difficulty in coming to terms with the phenomenal speed of the craft, as the crew rush about the Galaxy from planet to planet, only one step ahead of the Evil Federation. Gareth Thomas played Blake, headman of this, the BBC's answer to *The Magnificent Seven*. Looking for the most part, uncomfortable in the series, he finally vanished in a cloud of mystery leaving Avon in charge. One interesting aspect of the show was the computer, Zen, which chatted to the *Liberator*'s occupants constantly helping them with the more difficult task of escaping their

enemies. On the villains' side was Servalan (Jacqueline Pearce) who carried the art of over-acting to new heights, in her portrayal of the wicked leader of the Federation. By making the "heavy" a glamorous woman Terry Nation knew that he was on to a winner. "Audiences love evil ladies," he once commented in a newspaper interview.

Terry Nation worked on the concept for almost two years because as Chris Evans of the *Radio Times* reported, "what was missing from television was a really corking adventure yarn set against the limitless backdrop of interplanetary space." Borrowing one or two ideas from *Star Trek*, Nation incorporated a teleportation device aboard the *Liberator*. In order to make it different to Captain Kirk's, it was indicated on screen by a ripple effect.

The *Liberator* continued to take on new passengers to replace those killed in battle, men and women dedicated to fighting for

their freedom. Although unlike *Star Wars* the characters never really accepted one another. It was sometimes a case of "Who do I hate next?" As if adding insult to injury, Maloney suggested that he was looking for a much broader and more adult audience than the one that watched *Doctor Who*. Ironically, after twenty years, *Doctor Who* is still running.

In many ways, *Blake's 7* was superb entertainment. It joined the ranks of British TVSF such as *Survivors*, *Adventures of Don Quick*, *Doomwatch*, and *Day of the Triffids*. None of it great, but all of it consistent, and, unlike its contemporaries, the show has built up a huge fan following. But to sum up the general attitude to the show it's interesting to take a quote from the publications *Escape*, a collective description of television programmes over the last thirty years. "The only point of interest was whether *Blake* was dead or not. Now just the series is." ■



Blake's 7 stars Michael Keating as Vila (left) and Steven Pacey as Tarrant.

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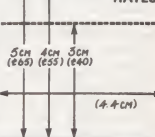
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Too many questions and too little space to answer them in. So let's get on with it... David Cowie of Clacton sent in this poser: "Are George Reeves, the actor who played Superman in the TV series and Christopher Reeve who plays him in the films related to each other?"

About as likely as you being related to David Bowie, dummy. The names are just similar, but it is one of those weird coincidences of the movies. While on the subject of Supey, anybody ever thought how deep a problem the Man of Steel has? Here he is with all these terrific super powers and with Lois Lane madly in love with him and the only way he can get his rocks off to dress up like a putz with glasses and an ill-fitting suit and be humiliated by the lady. I'd sure straighten him out if I got him onto my couch.

What happened to the movie of *Swamp Thing*? is a question that several people have written in asking, including Betty Wild of Bethnal Green, Tom Fuller of Fulham and somebody who calls himself "Berni Wrightson Fan" of Ealing Broadway.

Er, I'm not sure, friends. Some of you may have seen it as it did get a couple of bookings in country towns. For those of you that haven't seen it, *Swamp Thing* marks the absolute nadir in the otherwise interesting filmography of Wes Craven. It's cheap and tatty and looks just like a bad TV movie. The monster suits don't fit, the characters are laughable and the special effects a long way from special. Just how Mr Craven became involved in such a turkey is anybody's guess. For someone who has specialised in a sort of American rural gothic cinema, *Swamp Thing* would have seemed to be the perfect vehicle for his talents. Craven's other films are: *Last House on the Left* (72), *Hills Have Eyes* (77), *Summer of Fear* (TV movie 78) and *Stranger in our House*, *Deadly Blessing* (81) and for all you videophiles note that the video version does contain the whammo special effects ending in which a demon comes smashing up through the floor of the house. This was deleted from the cinema release prints). *Swamp Thing* (82), currently in production is *Hills Have Eyes 2* and in preparation is *Nightmare on Elm Street*.

Fabrizio Fabbrunni of Aberdeen wants to know whether Lamberto Bava is related to Mario Bava.

You bet your bippy, Fab (and listen, kid, nobody's going to believe a name like that). Lamberto is the son of the late Mario. Lamberto used to act as an assistant director for his father as well as shooting second unit for him. He was also responsible for much of Mario's last film *Shock*. Mario Bava, pretty well considered the godfather of



Italian horror cinema of the type now being mined by Dario Argento and Lucio Fulci (and apologies to all concerned for mentioning those two on the same typewriter ribbon) used to be one of Italy's leading cinematographers until he made his directorial debut with *Black Sunday* in 1960. Also known as *Revenge of the Vampire*, it was a visually enthralling and vaguely disturbing film if the plot and performances (at least in the dubbed version) left a lot to be desired. For all those fettuccini' fright freaks, here's a run down of all the Bavafix from both Popa and figlio, courtesy of the divine Mr Alan Jones: *Black Sunday* 1960, aka *Revenge of the Vampire*; *Hercules in the Haunted World* (61, aka *Hercules in the Centre of the Earth* which co-starred Mr Yawn himself, Christopher Lee); *Erk the Conqueror* (61, aka *The Invaders*, aka *Fury of the Vikings*); *The Evil Eye* (62 aka *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*); *Night is the Phantom* (63, aka *What!* with Mr Yawn again, who spends most of his time as a ghost whipping Daliah Lavi and for trivia freaks, it's yours truly's favourite Bavafix); *Black Sabbath* (63, which was a trilogy of terror with Boris Karloff as a wurdalak, a kind of vampire); *Blood and Black Lace* (64); *Planet of the Vampires* (65, aka *Terror in Outer Space*, aka *The Demon Planet* and a film often cited, quite correctly, as one of the influences on *Alien*); *Arizona Bill* (65, aka *The Road to Fort Alamo*); *Kill*

Baby Kill (66, aka *Curse of the Living Dead*, aka *Operation Fear* and incidentally this movie has one of my favourite horror scenes in which somebody tries to chop their own head off); *Knives of the Avenger* (67, aka *The Shower of Knives*); *Dr Goldfoot and the Girl Bombs* (67, and a terrible sequel to the equally awful *Dr Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine*); *Blood Brides* (69, aka *Hatchet For a Honeymoon*); *Five Dolls for the August Moon* (69); *Four Times This Night* (70); *Roy Colt and Winchester Jack* (70); *Twilight of the Death Nerve* (71, aka *Blood Bath*, aka *Carnage*, aka *Last House on the Left Part 2*); *Baron Blood* (72); *House of Exorcism* (72, aka *Lisa and the Devil*); *Shock* (78). Phew! Lamberto Bava has, thus far, only one film to his credit as sole director, the simply extraordinary *Macabre* which while it has never been picked up for theatrical release in England, is available on video. Lamberto has also worked with Argento as an assistant director. Back to Bava Snr. He was also a master of special effects as a goosey at any of his films will show you - just take a look at the floating Stanley knife terror of *Shock* but he really reached his peak with Argento's *Inferno* - and can you believe it, friends, American audiences haven't seen that masterpiece yet, it's still gathering dust on the Fox shelves in good old USA - for which he designed and executed the thrilling underwater sequence. While on water, Bava Snr also devised the

parting the Red Sea scenes for the lamentable *Moses the Law Giver* teleop in which Burt Lancaster did his impression of Charlton Heston giving his impression of Moses. He also devised the Cyclops for an Italian TV production of *The Illiad*. This filmography is, as far as we know, complete. But Bava worked extensively in Italian TV, so don't think for a minute that this listing is the extent of his contributions to that medium. Additions, corrections will be rewarded in some cheap way.

Germy Woods of Stratford, writes, "After seeing *This Island, Earth* in the recent BBC science fiction season, I've fallen madly in love with Faith Domergue. What can you tell me about this beautiful actress?"

Not how to pronounce her name, that's for sure, and maybe that's why she faded from view over the years - it's tough to be a household word when nobody knows how to say it. Born in 1925, Faith was one of Howard Hughes' "discoveries" and was launched in 1950 with a massive publicity campaign behind her, although she'd had a bit part in 1946's *Young Widow*. The rest of her (mostly undistinguished) filmography is: *Where Danger Lives* (50); *Vendetta* (50); *Duel at Silver Creek* (52); *Great Sioux Uprising* (53); *This is My Love* (54); *Cult of the Cobra* (55 in which she played a snake lady who bumps off a bunch of US servicemen who get too inquisitive about her habit of shedding her skin); *Santa Fe Pas-*



sage (55); *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (55); *This Island, Earth* (55); *Voyage to a Prehistoric Planet* (65 aka *Prehistoric Planet Women*); *Track of Thunder* (68); *The Gamblers* (69); *The Perversion* (69); *One On Top of the Other* (70); *Legacy of Blood* (71); *So Evil My Sister* (72); *House of Seven Corpses* (73). I think I can detect a definite drop in the quality of films there, towards the end.

I get lots of letters about Fantasy Females and I'll get around to answering them, but here's one for the girls—me included. Mel Gibson... now there's a name to er, conjure with. Mel is actually an American, born in 1956. At age 12 his family (he's one of 11 children!) emigrated to Australia where over the years he picked up that lovely accent. Mel got interested in acting and studied at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) and has appeared in various stage productions including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Waiting For Godot*, *No Names, No Pack Drill*, *Oedipus*, *Death of a Salesman* (opposite Warren Mitchell), and *Henry IV*. He served time in assorted Aussie TV shows including *The Sullivans*, *The Oracle* and the highly-rated *Cop Shop*. When George Miller decided to stop being a doctor (and listen, George, you'll be sorry!) and become a film director, he chose Mel to play *Mad Max* in tight, squeaky leather pants. Before *Mad Max 2* (and even tighter leather pants, not to mention that hinged steel

leg brace) Mel played a retarded youth who gets involved romantically with an older woman, Piper Laurie. The film was called *Tim* (79) and to the best of my knowledge has never been released here. The following year saw *Attack Force Z* (aka *The Z Men*). Australian film history was made in 82 with *Mad Max 2* and the same year Mel showed that he could look sexy in baggy shorts in *Gallipoli*. In 1983 he starred with (lucky) Sigourney Weaver in Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* which is these days just called *Living Dangerously*. He's currently playing Fletcher Christian in a new film version of the *Mutiny on the Bounty* saga called *Saga of the Bounty*. After that it's likely to be *Mad Max 3*. And since I came up with the best, most interesting question then I'm taking the prize—an all expenses trip to Oz to have a candlelit dinner with guess who!

Last and least... Bill Schulman of St Alban's, Herts wants info about an old TV series he thinks was a small screen version of *Francis the Talking Mule*.

Close Bill, but no cigar. I'm betting the piece of TV high-luck that's been giving you sleepless nights is *Mr Ed*. The sitcom series, about a horse that will only talk to his master, architect Wilbur Post (Alan Young) ran four seasons, broadcast between 1961 and 1965 in USA. As for when it was telecast here, someone else will have to supply that info... it was before my time!



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